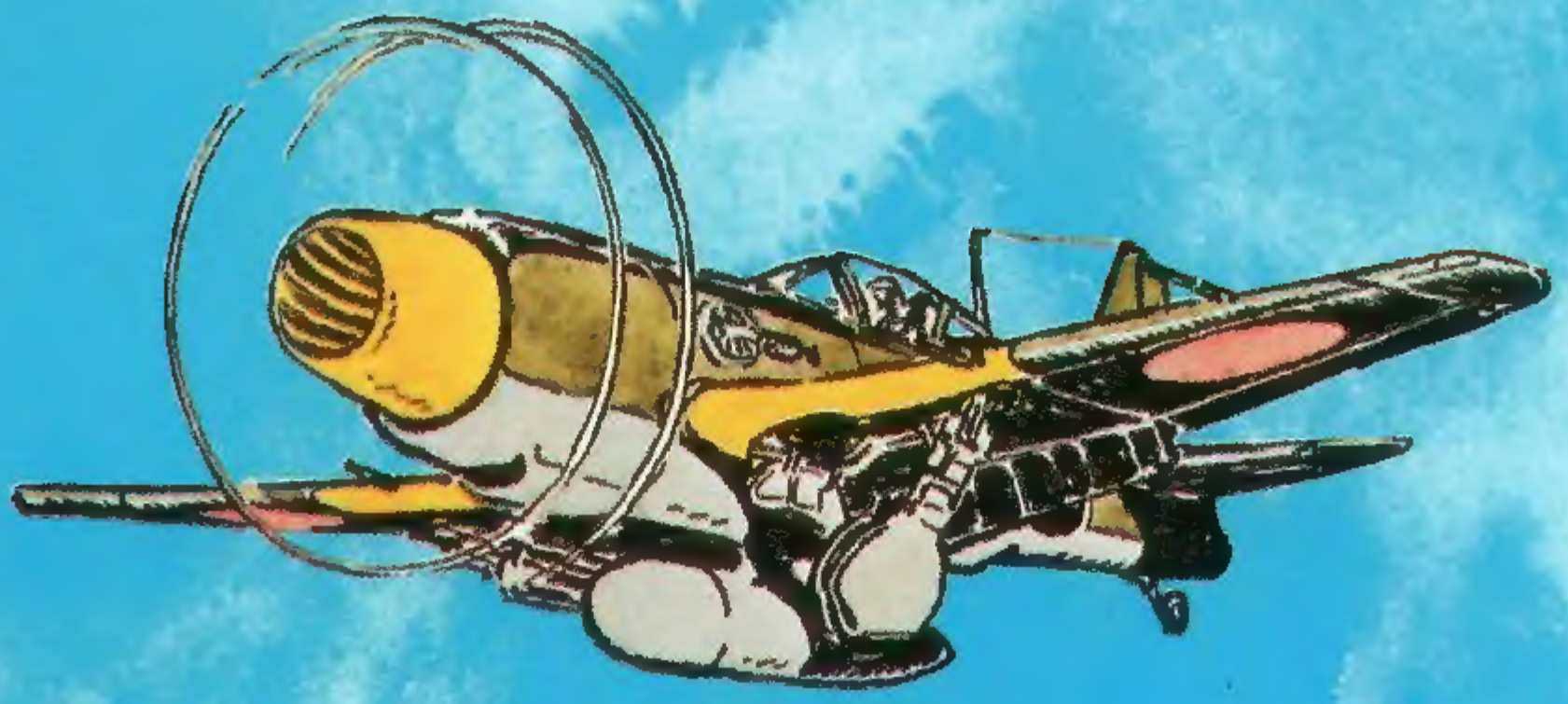
少年サンデーコミックス
Scomics

THE COCKPIT

THE EXTRA STORIES
VOLUME 2



松本零士
LEIJI MATSUMOTO

NOTICE!

Japanese comics or *manga* are read from right to left across the page instead of left to right. Also, if your reader supports Japanese *manga* format (back to front instead of front to back) then set it so for easier reading. Thanks!

THE COCKPIT (aka BATTLEFIELD)
The Extra Stories (Volume 2 of 2)

by Leiji Matsumoto

A Google Translate ® adaptation

English language cleanup
by Richard Mandel

Released in 2026 by fans for fans
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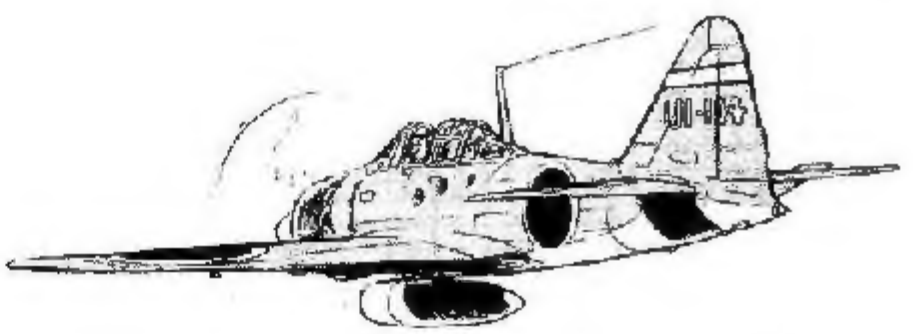
■松本零士■
LEIJI MATSUMOTO

INTRODUCTION
by Richard Mandel

Hi again, and welcome back to our mutual first English language trip through the late great Leiji Matsumoto's *Battlefield* series of manga stories. We're done with the first and original anthology, *The Cockpit*. Before we begin the next one, *Hard Metal*, there's a set of a dozen stories that were written and published by Matsumoto around the same time as the last two volumes of *The Cockpit* or shortly thereafter but were never later published as part of it. That had to wait until the various *Cockpit* Collections - and there have been more than one - came along many years later. They could have easily been added as Volumes 10 and 11 had they been incorporated into *The Cockpit* proper at the time. Why? I don't know. I'll leave the answer to that question to the true Leijiverse scholars and experts. What I will do instead is give you my own English adaptation of these as a set of two standalone fan produced volumes under the title of *The Cockpit: The Extra Stories*. That's to help you keep them in their proper place for those of you collecting my English adaptations. It's as unofficial a name as are my English adaptions but hopefully it will do for our mutual purposes. So without further adieu here we go with *The Extra Stories*. I hope you enjoy them as much as you did *The Cockpit* proper.



These are stories of men, women, and the machines of war.

MY NAME IS FRED ALBATROSS.
I AM 43 YEARS OLD.

I'VE BEEN SEVERELY NEARSIGHTED ALL OF MY LIFE, AND I'M NOW HAVING TO DEAL WITH THE ONSET OF PRESBYOPIA. THAT'S AN AGE-RELATED THING WHEN YOU CLOSE-UP VISION STARTS GETTING BLURRY.

I'VE ALWAYS HAD GOOD LONG SIGHT. THAT MEANT I COULD SEE THINGS AT A DISTANCE THAT OTHERS COULDN'T SEE VERY WELL ....

SANTA ISABEL'S NECKLACE

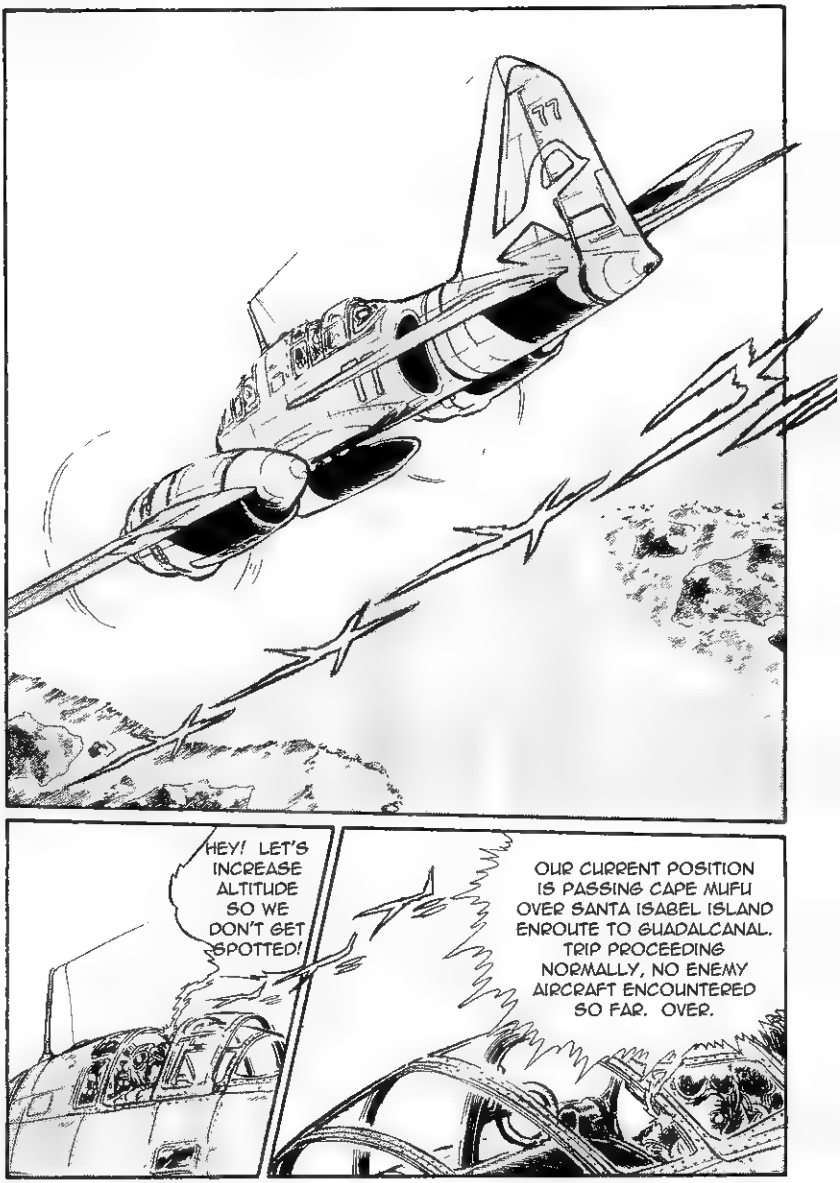
I'LL BET THAT GUY DIED LONG BEFORE HE WOULD HAVE HEARD THE GUNSHOT. THAT'S BECAUSE BULLETS TRAVEL FASTER THAN THE SPEED OF SOUND. AS I SAW IT, IT WAS HIS DAY TO DIE. PRE-ORDAINED, IF YOU WILL.

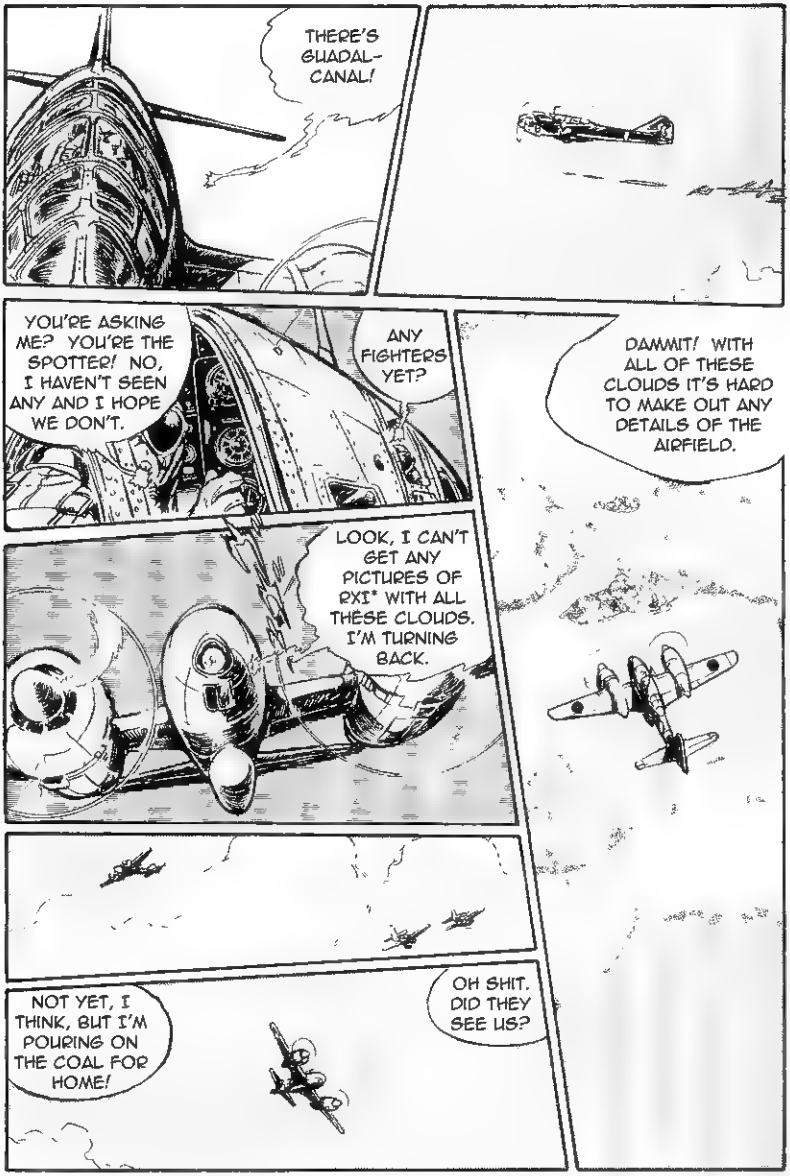
I STRIPPED THE BODY OF ITS GEAR AND WEAPONS, OF COURSE.
THIS POOR JAP WAS UNUSUALLY WELL ARMED. NOT ONLY DID HE HAVE A NAMBU "TANKER" PISTOL BUT A TYPE 2 TERA RIFLE AS WELL.
IT WAS ORIGINALLY MADE FOR JAP PARATROOPERS. WE CAPTURED A LOT OF THESE AFTER LEYTE GULF.
THAT'S A BREAK-DOWN RIFLE, BY THE WAY.

I'VE BUILT UP QUITE A COLLECTION WHILE I'VE BEEN OUT HERE.
AFTER THE WAR AND IF I CAN GET IT ALL BACK TO THE STATES, I MIGHT HAVE TO OPEN A WAR SURPLUS SHOP.
NOUMEA COMMAND CENTER CALLED. THEY WANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH YOU, ALBATROSS.
NOUMEA?! THAT'S CLEAR ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CORAL SEA? WHAT DO THEY WANT WITH ME?
THE JAPS MUST BE UP TO SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR THEM TO CALL ME.
NEW HEBRIDES ISLANDS
SANTA ISABEL ISLAND
GUADALCANAL ISLAND
NOUMEA
NEW CALEDONIA
THE CORAL SEA

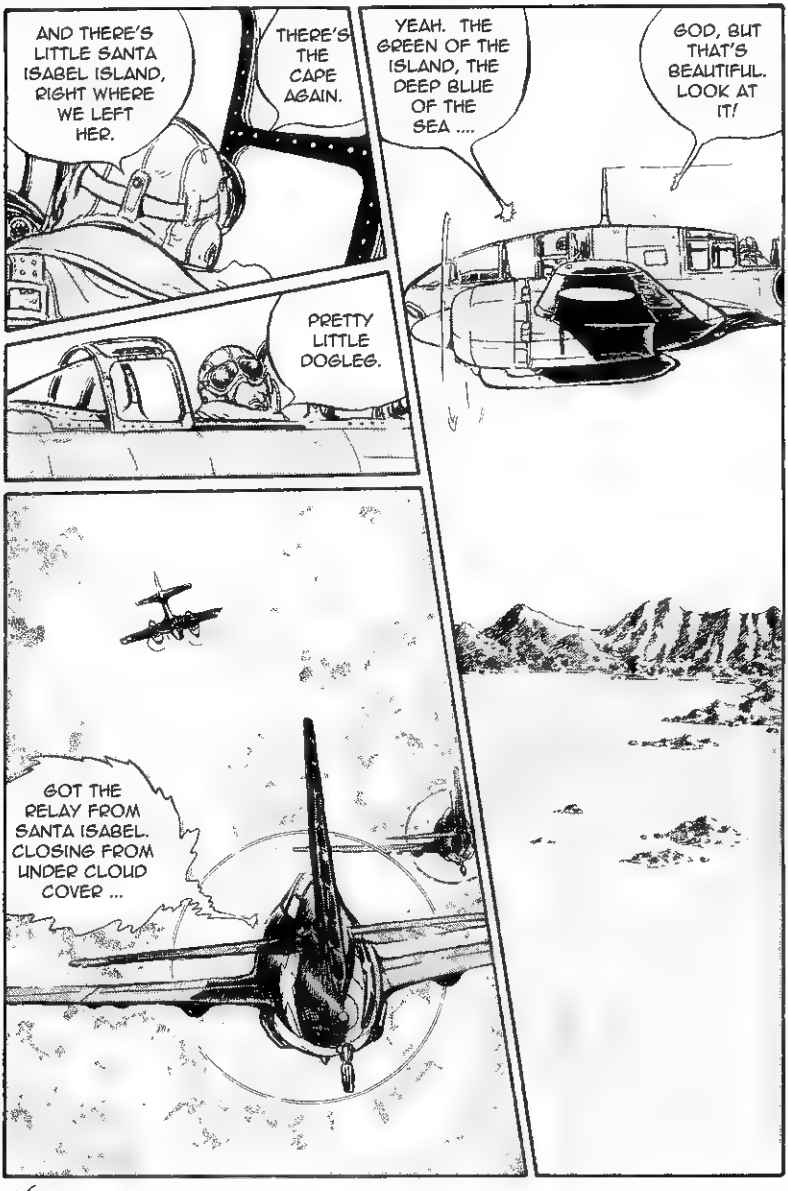
UHH ...
WHAT IS IT? IS IT SOMETHING IMPORTANT?
HMM ...
I'M SORRY BUT I CAN'T READ THIS. COULD YOU REWRITE IT BIGGER?
OH, I FORGOT! YOUR EYESIGHT! I'M SO SORRY. I'LL GET RIGHT ON IT.
... ...
AND YOU SAY THAT HAPPENS AFTER YOU TURN 30? I HOPE I DON'T CATCH IT.
IT WAS BAD ENOUGH TO BEGIN WITH, BUT THIS PRESBYOPIA SHIT HAS MADE IT WORSE.
THAT'S THEM
YEP. JAP TYPE 100 STRATEGIC RECON AIRCRAFT, ALLIED CODE NAME "DINAH."
AGAIN?
OUR FRIENDS ARE BACK.

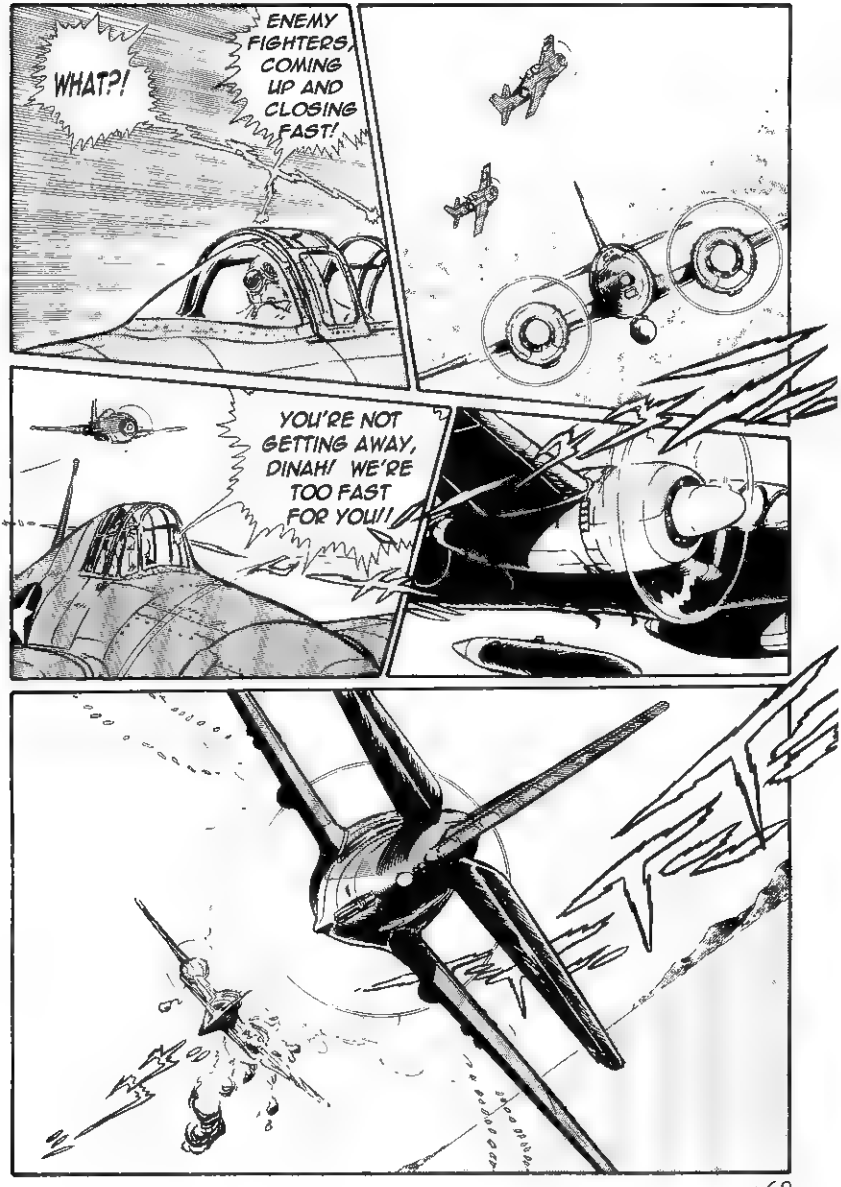
DINAH TYPE II, HEADING IN YOUR GENERAL DIRECTION.
THIS IS SANTA ISABEL TO K.E.N., SANTA ISABEL TO K.E.N., I HAVE A DINAH SIGHTING.
THIS IS K.E.N. TO SANTA ISABEL, ROGER THAT! WE'LL GET IT KNOCKED DOWN PRONTO, OVER!
BUT HOW CAN YOU TELL HIGH UP THERE WITH YOUR BAD EYESIGHT? I DON'T GET IT.
IT'S MY CLOSE-UP VISION THAT'S SHOT. MY LONG SIGHT HAS ALWAYS BEEN EXCELLENT.


77
HEY! LET'S INCREASE ALTITUDE SO WE DON'T GET SPOTTED!
OUR CURRENT POSITION IS PASSING CAPE MUFU OVER SANTA ISABEL ISLAND ENROUTE TO GUADALCANAL. TRIP PROCEEDING NORMALLY, NO ENEMY AIRCRAFT ENCOUNTERED SO FAR. OVER.


THERE'S GUADAL-CANAL!
ANY FIGHTERS YET?
YOU'RE ASKING ME? YOU'RE THE SPOTTER! NO, I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY AND I HOPE WE DON'T.
DAMMIT! WITH ALL OF THESE CLOUDS IT'S HARD TO MAKE OUT ANY DETAILS OF THE AIRFIELD.
LOOK, I CAN'T GET ANY PICTURES OF RXI* WITH ALL THESE CLOUDS. I'M TURNING BACK.
OH SHIT. DID THEY SEE US?
NOT YET, I THINK, BUT I'M POURING ON THE COAL FOR HOME!

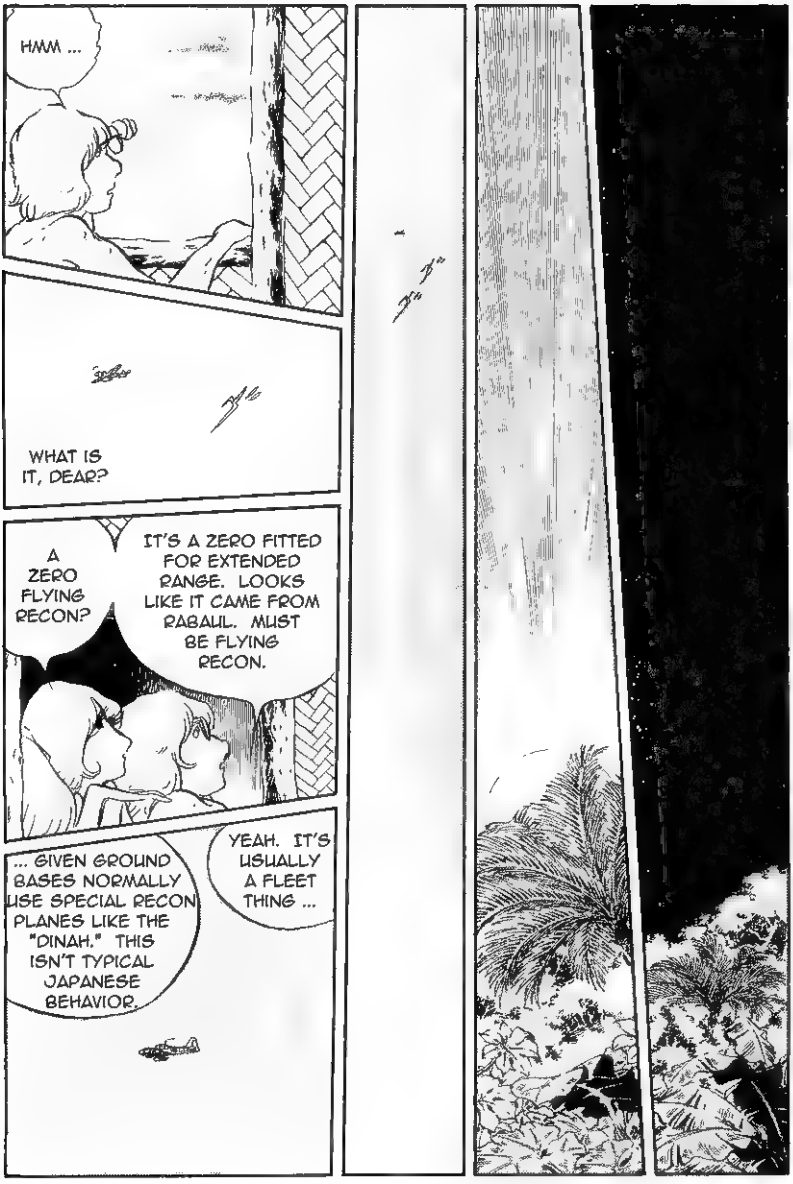
(*) "RXI" – THE JAPANESE CODE DESIGNATION FOR THE AIRFIELD THEY HAD ALMOST COMPLETED ON GUADALCANAL BEFORE IT WAS CAPTURED BY THE AMERICANS AND RENAMED HENDERSON FIELD.

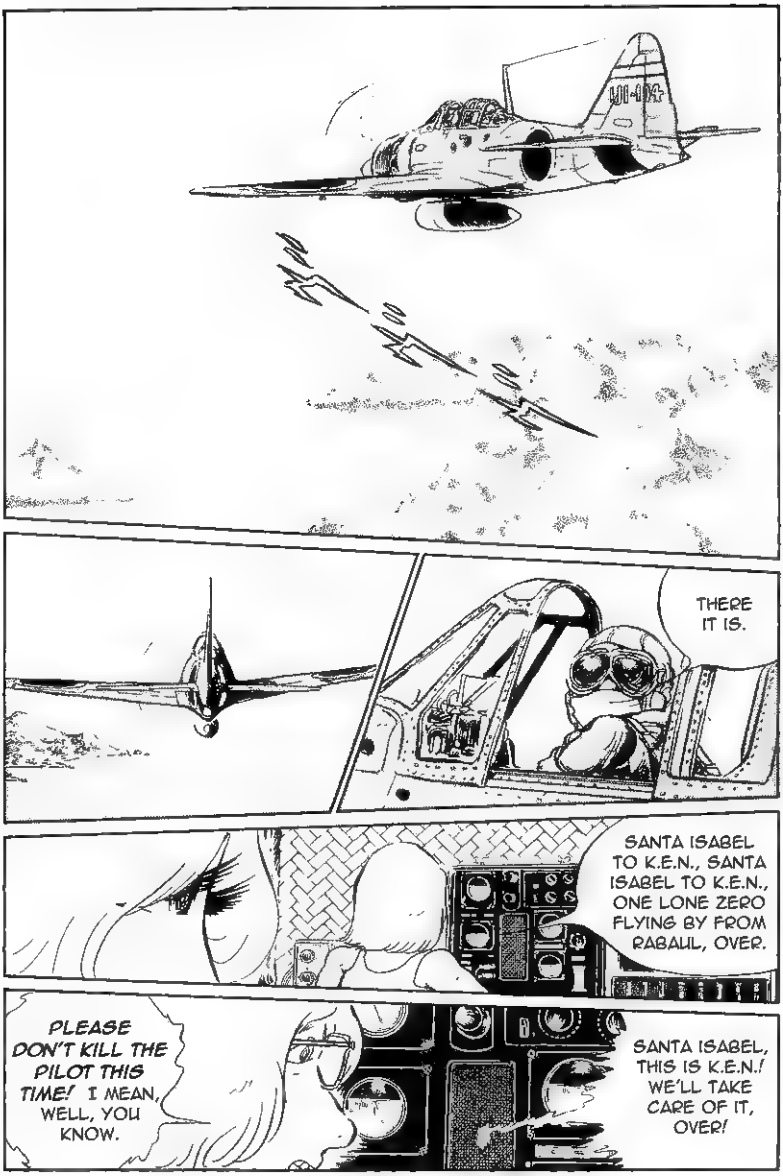

AND THERE'S LITTLE SANTA ISABEL ISLAND, RIGHT WHERE WE LEFT HER.
THERE'S THE CAPE AGAIN.
PRETTY LITTLE DOGLEG.
YEAH. THE GREEN OF THE ISLAND, THE DEEP BLUE OF THE SEA ....
GOD, BUT THAT'S BEAUTIFUL. LOOK AT IT!
GOT THE RELAY FROM SANTA ISABEL. CLOSING FROM UNDER CLOUD COVER ...

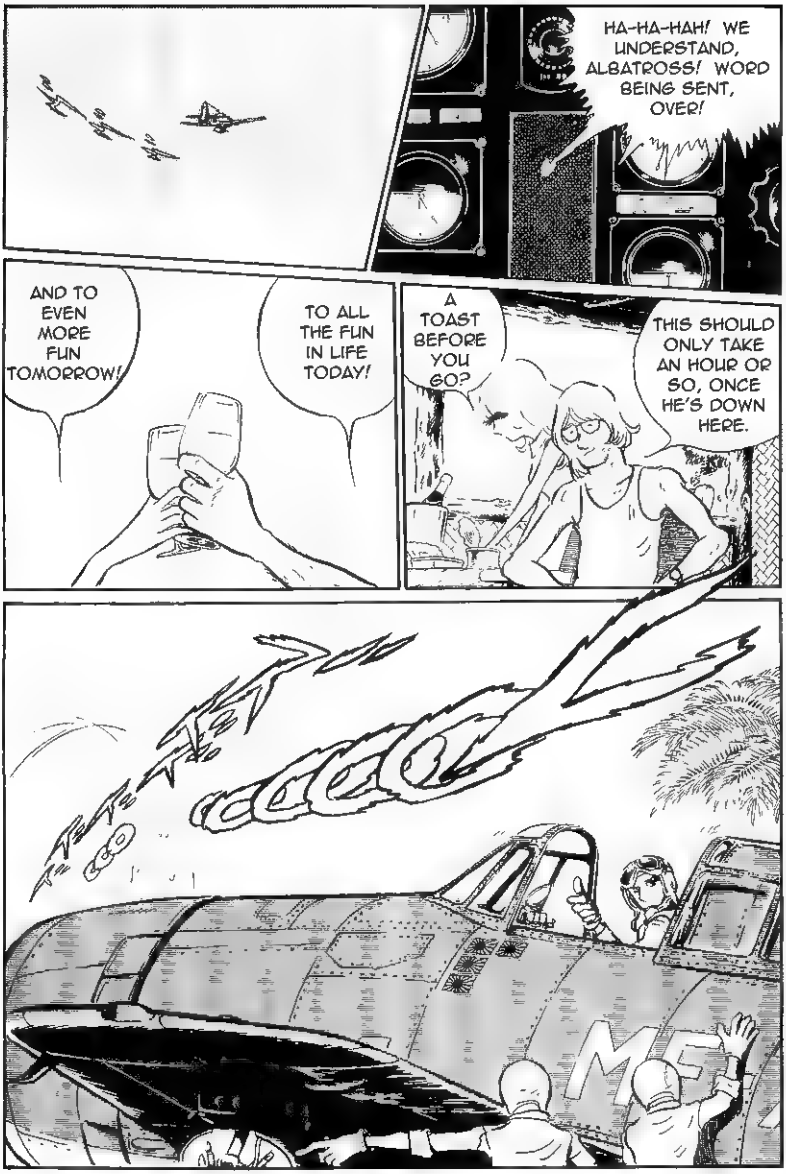

WHAT?!
ENEMY FIGHTERS, COMING UP AND CLOSING FAST!
YOU'RE NOT GETTING AWAY, DINAH! WE'RE TOO FAST FOR YOU!!

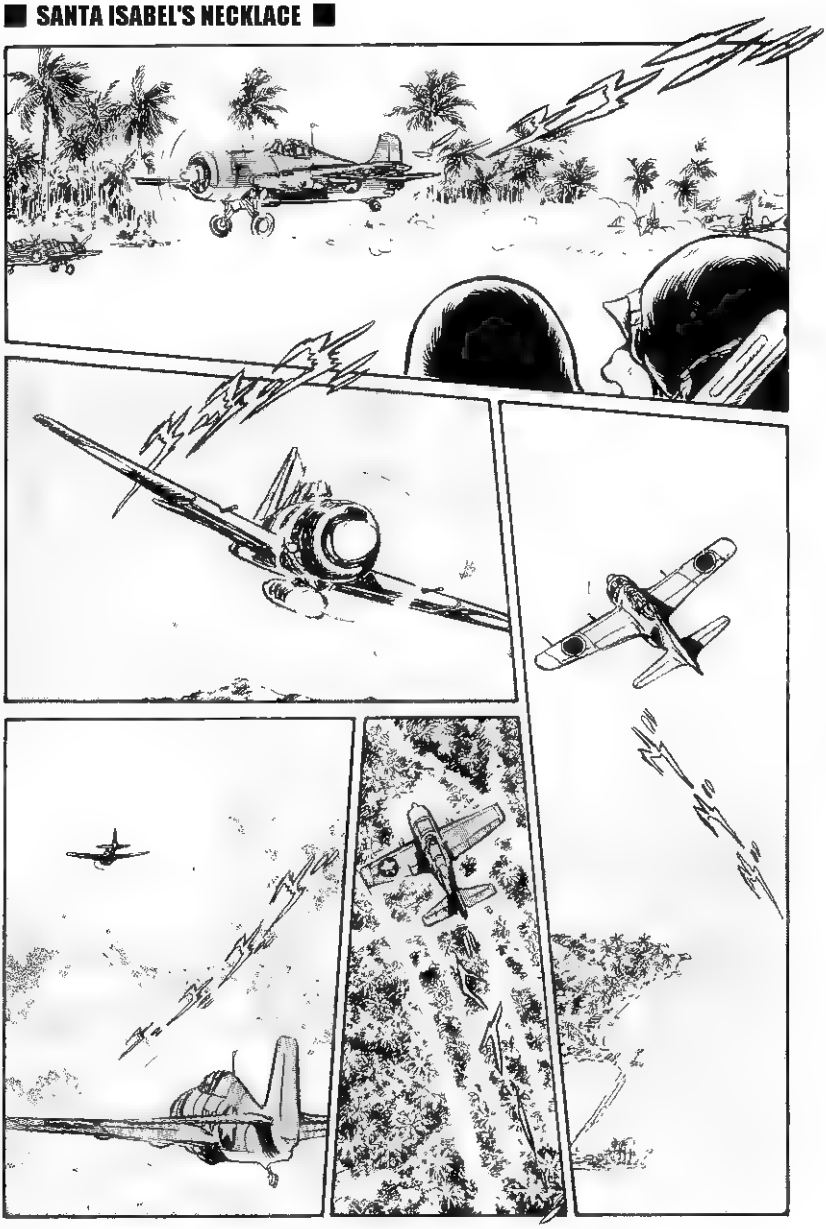
DAMN ROOKIES KILLED THE CREW! NOW I CAN'T HAVE ANY FUN FOR MY PART WITH THIS ONE.
OH WELL ....
THAT'S PROBABLY IT FOR TODAY. WANT TO KNOCK OFF EARLY?
AND THAT'S A WRAP, FOLKS!
OH MARIA!
I'D RATHER KNOCK BOOTS, FRED.
THIS MUST BE PARADISE ... !

YES ... PARADISE!
BEING ... A ... BEACH BUM ... DOESN'T ... PAY ... IN THE STATES ... BUT A ... COASTAL ... SPOTTER ...
... OUT ... HERE! ... IT'S THE ... LIFE! ... OH! ... OH! ... AND ... I WISH ... IT ... WOULD ... NEVER ... END ... OH! ... OH! ... OOHH! ... OOHH! ... OOOHHHH-AAAAHH!!
BUT IF IT HADN'T ... BEEN FOR THE WAR ... I WOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN THIS JOB ... AND YOU!
OH! ... OH! ... OH FRED! ... THE SOLOMONS ... I'D LOVE ... TO LIVE HERE ... ALWAYS ... SAVE FOR ... THE WAR ... OH! ...

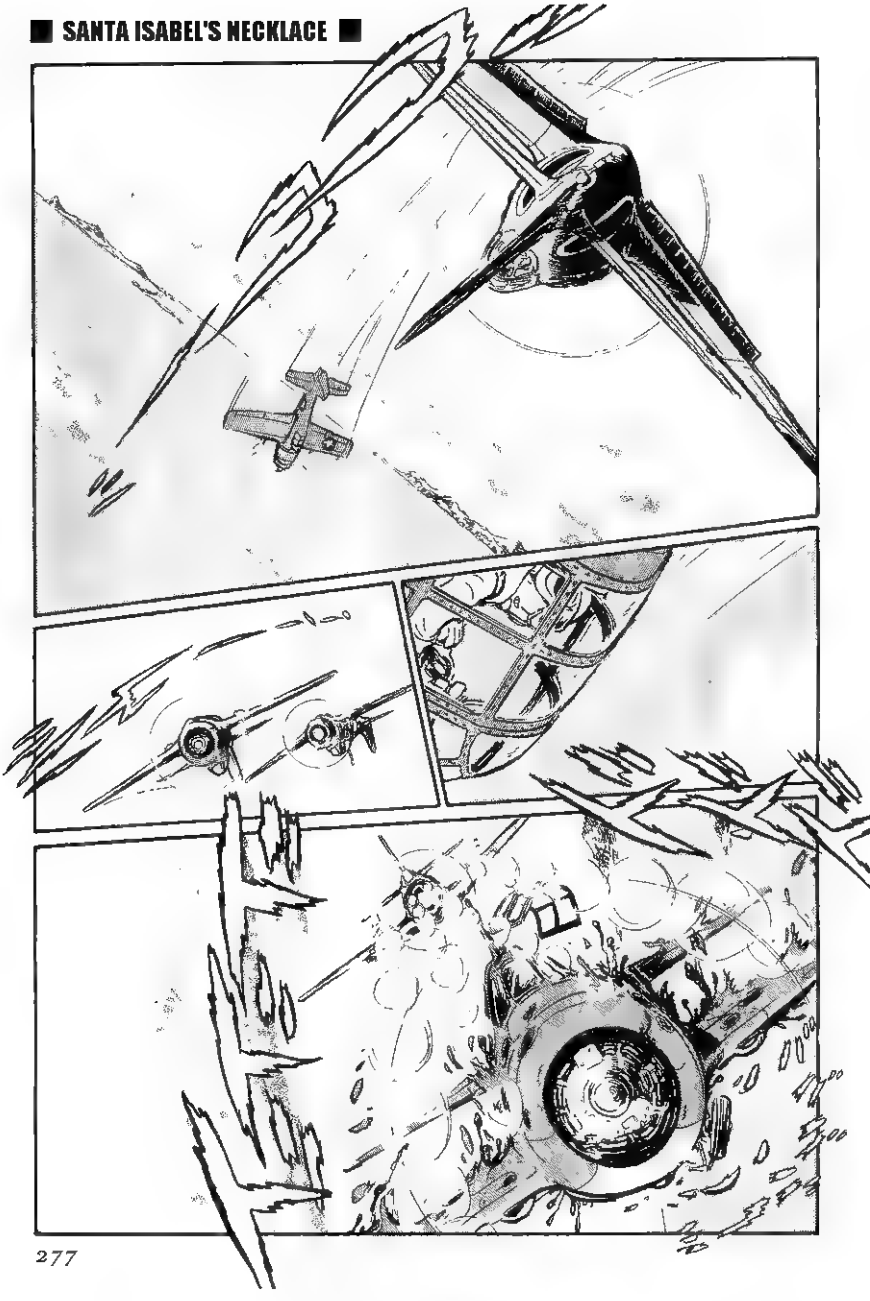

HMM ...
WHAT IS IT, DEAR?
A ZERO FLYING RECON?
IT'S A ZERO FITTED FOR EXTENDED RANGE. LOOKS LIKE IT CAME FROM RABAUL. MUST BE FLYING RECON.
... GIVEN GROUND BASES NORMALLY USE SPECIAL RECON PLANES LIKE THE "DINAH." THIS ISN'T TYPICAL JAPANESE BEHAVIOR.
YEAH. IT'S USUALLY A FLEET THING ...

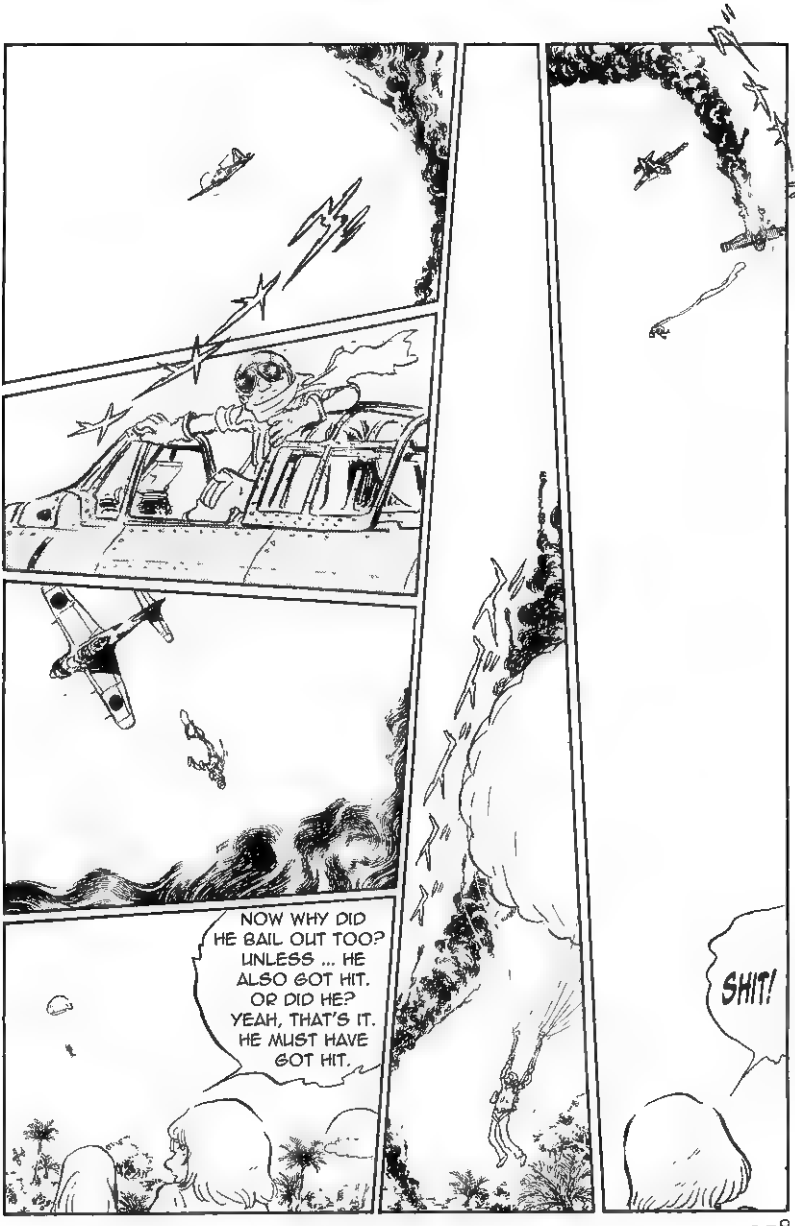

THERE IT IS.
SANTA ISABEL TO K.E.N., SANTA ISABEL TO K.E.N., ONE LONE ZERO FLYING BY FROM RABAUL, OVER.
PLEASE DON'T KILL THE PILOT THIS TIME! I MEAN, WELL, YOU KNOW.
SANTA ISABEL, THIS IS K.E.N.! WE'LL TAKE CARE OF IT, OVER!

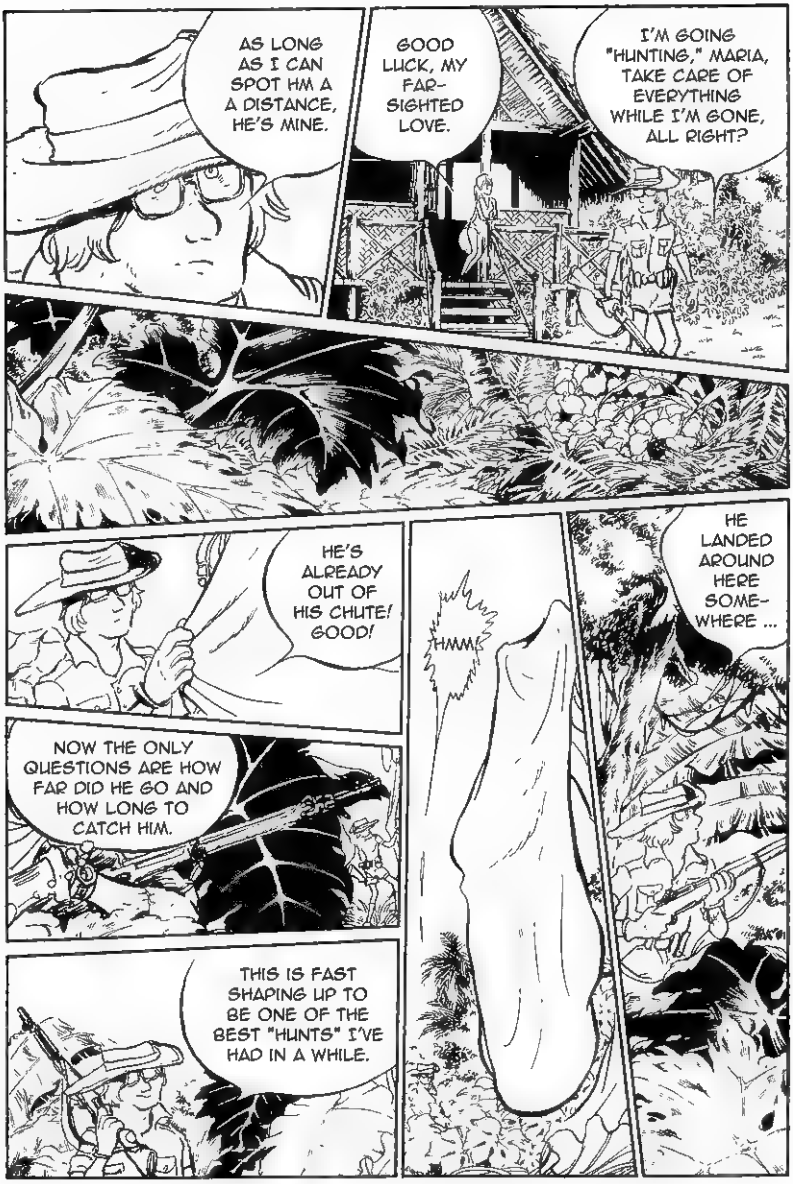

HA-HA-HAH! WE UNDERSTAND, ALBATROSS! WORD BEING SENT, OVER!
TO ALL THE FUN IN LIFE TODAY!
AND TO EVEN MORE FUN TOMORROW!
A TOAST BEFORE YOU GO?
THIS SHOULD ONLY TAKE AN HOUR OR SO, ONCE HE'S DOWN HERE.

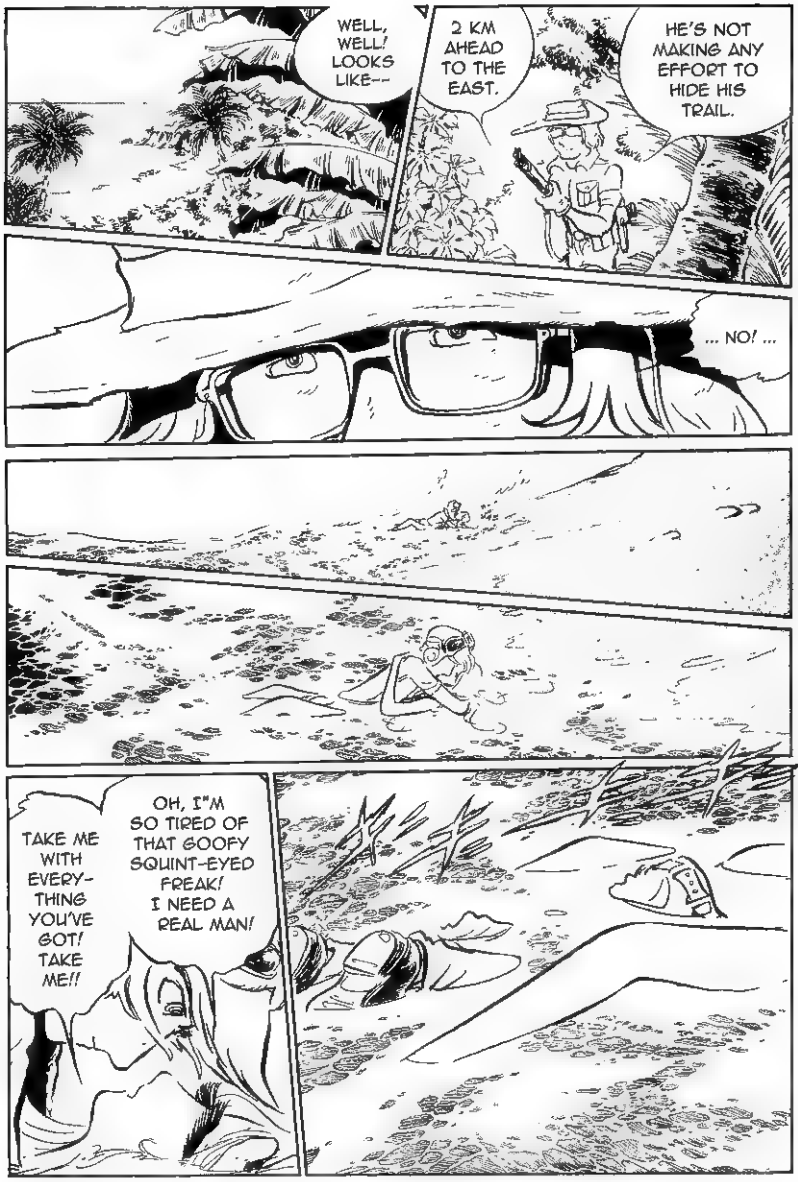


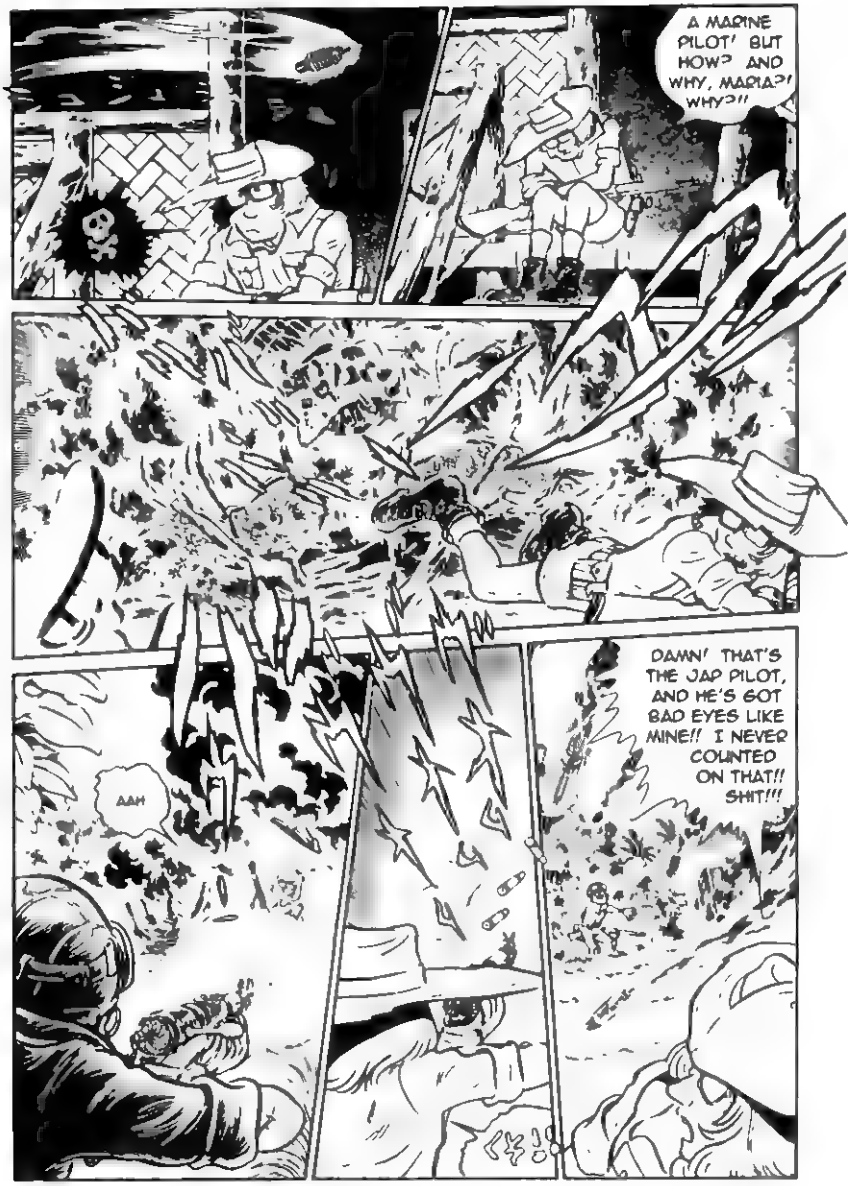
STAY BACK, MARIA, JUST IN CASE.
ME, I'LL WATCH.
UH-OH.
HE'S ALREADY DROPPED HIS TANK! HE KNOWS TO DO THAT! DAMN! THIS GUY MUST BE A VETERAN!




NOW WHY DID HE BAIL OUT TOO? UNLESS ... HE ALSO GOT HIT. OR DID HE? YEAH, THAT'S IT. HE MUST HAVE GOT HIT.
SHIT!

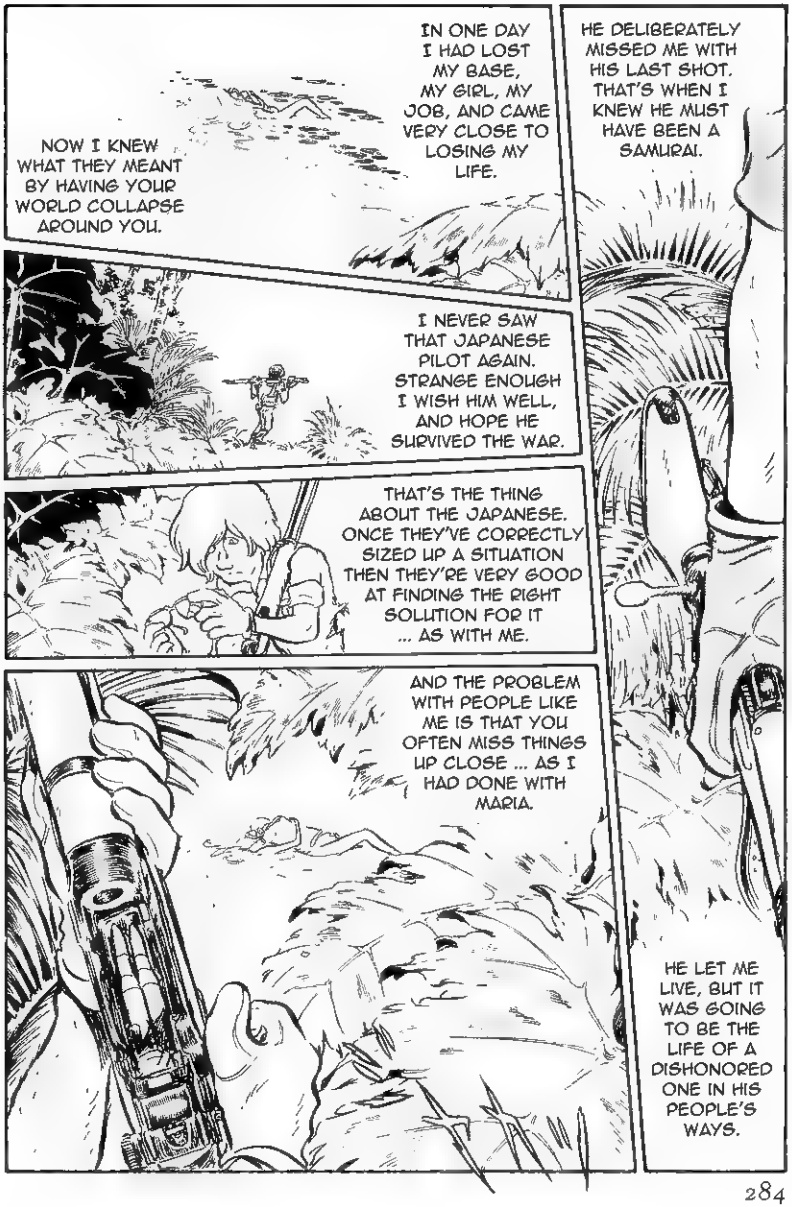

I'M GOING "HUNTING," MARIA, TAKE CARE OF EVERYTHING WHILE I'M GONE, ALL RIGHT?
GOOD LUCK, MY FAR-SIGHTED LOVE.
AS LONG AS I CAN SPOT HM A A DISTANCE, HE'S MINE.
HE LANDED AROUND HERE SOME-WHERE ...
HMM
HE'S ALREADY OUT OF HIS CHUTE! GOOD!
NOW THE ONLY QUESTIONS ARE HOW FAR DID HE GO AND HOW LONG TO CATCH HIM.
THIS IS FAST SHAPING UP TO BE ONE OF THE BEST "HUNTS" I'VE HAD IN A WHILE.


WELL, WELL! LOOKS LIKE--
2 KM AHEAD TO THE EAST.
HE'S NOT MAKING ANY EFFORT TO HIDE HIS TRAIL.
... NO! ...
TAKE ME WITH EVERY-THING YOU'VE GOT! TAKE ME!!
OH, I'M SO TIRED OF THAT GOOFY SQUINT-EYED FREAK! I NEED A REAL MAN!


A MARINE PILOT! BUT HOW? AND WHY, MARIA?! WHY?!!
DAMN! THAT'S THE JAP PILOT, AND HE'S GOT BAD EYES LIKE MINE!! I NEVER COUNTED ON THAT!! SHIT!!!
AAH

THAT MEANS FRED AND THAT JAP PILOT MUST'VE FOUND EACH OTHER! OH DON'T LEAVE ME NOW, ROGER! STAY WITH ME! SAVE ME, ROGER, SAVE ME!!
THAT'S AN EXPLOSION! AND GUNFIRE TOO!
WE KNOW STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN TO US AROUND HERE. ME FIND OUT WHY. WATCH YOU FROM FAR LONG TIME. FIND OUT WHAT GOING ON. COME TO, HOW YOU SAY, "PUT OUT OF BUSINESS?" NOW YOU FACE DEATH, YANKEE.
... YOU ... YOU ... YOU'RE ... BUT HOW ... HOW DID ... WHY? ... WHY DID ... YOU COME? ... WHY? ... I ... I WANT ... TO KNOW ...

YOUR EYES ... LIKE MINE!
OH, MARIA! ....
NO WORRY. I NO KILL GIRL OR LOVER. MY FIGHT NOT WITH THEM. WITH YOU. YOU I TAKE CARE OF. NOW IS DONE, I WILL GO. GOODBYE, YANKEE.
... TH ... THANK YOU ....


NOW I KNEW WHAT THEY MEANT BY HAVING YOUR WORLD COLLAPSE AROUND YOU.
IN ONE DAY I HAD LOST MY BASE, MY GIRL, MY JOB, AND CAME VERY CLOSE TO LOSING MY LIFE.
I NEVER SAW THAT JAPANESE PILOT AGAIN. STRANGE ENOUGH I WISH HIM WELL, AND HOPE HE SURVIVED THE WAR.
THAT'S THE THING ABOUT THE JAPANESE. ONCE THEY'VE CORRECTLY SIZED UP A SITUATION THEN THEY'RE VERY GOOD AT FINDING THE RIGHT SOLUTION FOR IT ... AS WITH ME.
AND THE PROBLEM WITH PEOPLE LIKE ME IS THAT YOU OFTEN MISS THINGS UP CLOSE ... AS I HAD DONE WITH MARIA.
HE DELIBERATELY MISSED ME WITH HIS LAST SHOT. THAT'S WHEN I KNEW HE MUST HAVE BEEN A SAMURAI.
HE LET ME LIVE, BUT IT WAS GOING TO BE THE LIFE OF A DISHONORED ONE IN HIS PEOPLE'S WAYS.

NOW IT WAS MY TURN TO ASSESS THE SITUATION UP CLOSE, AS I SHOULD HAVE DONE BEFORE, AND DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

MY NAME IS FRED ALBATROSS, AND I WAS A FORMER COMBAT SPOTTER DURING THE WAR ON SANTA ISABEL ISLAND OFF GUADALCANAL. IT WAS A PLACE I LONG THOUGHT OF AS HEAVEN, BUT IT TURNED INTO MY OWN PERSONAL HELL BEFORE THE END.

ENDE

SANTA ISABEL'S NECKLACE

Published in the August 25, 1981 issue of B g Comic

LEIJI
MATSUMOTO
PRESENTS

THE COCKPIT

NOTICE

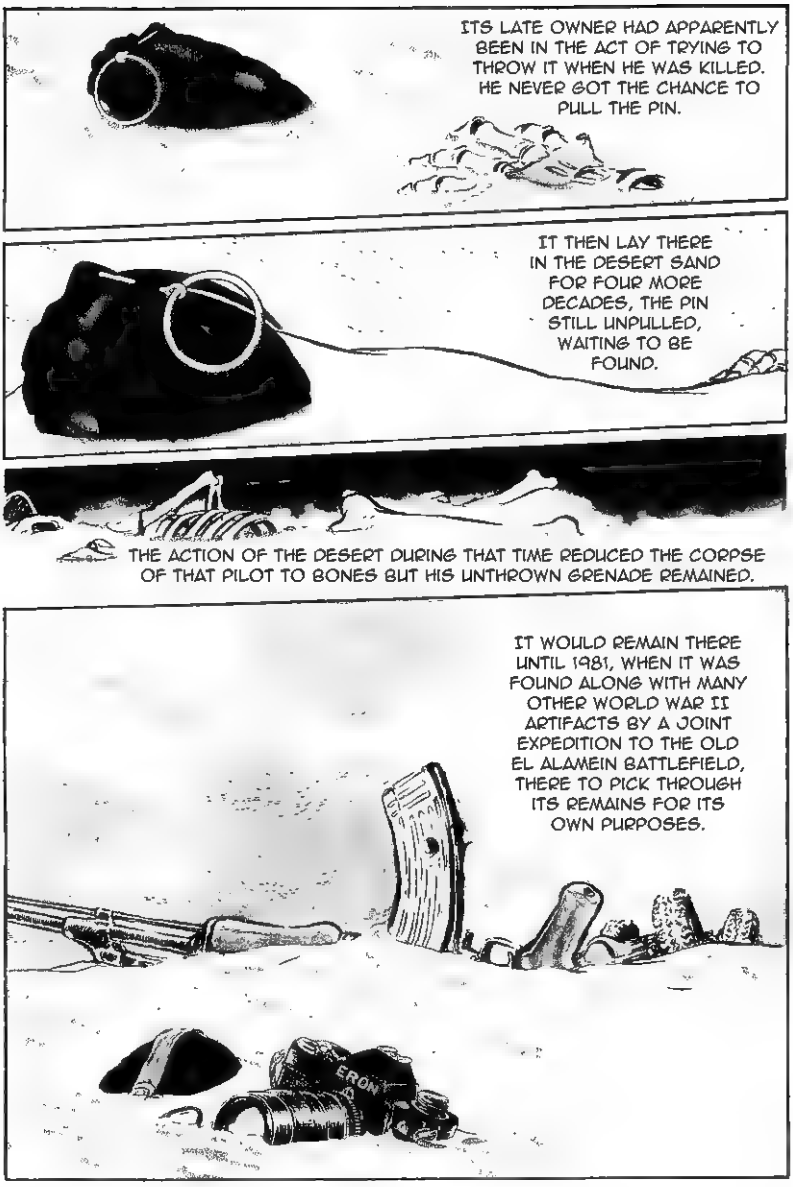
Google Translate AI did a particularly wretched job with the next manga story. This in turn forced me to both rewrite and extrapolate far more than I would have liked, and as has been the case with earlier manga in *The Cockpit* proper. My apologies, and both you and I will hope that someday a better translation will become available.

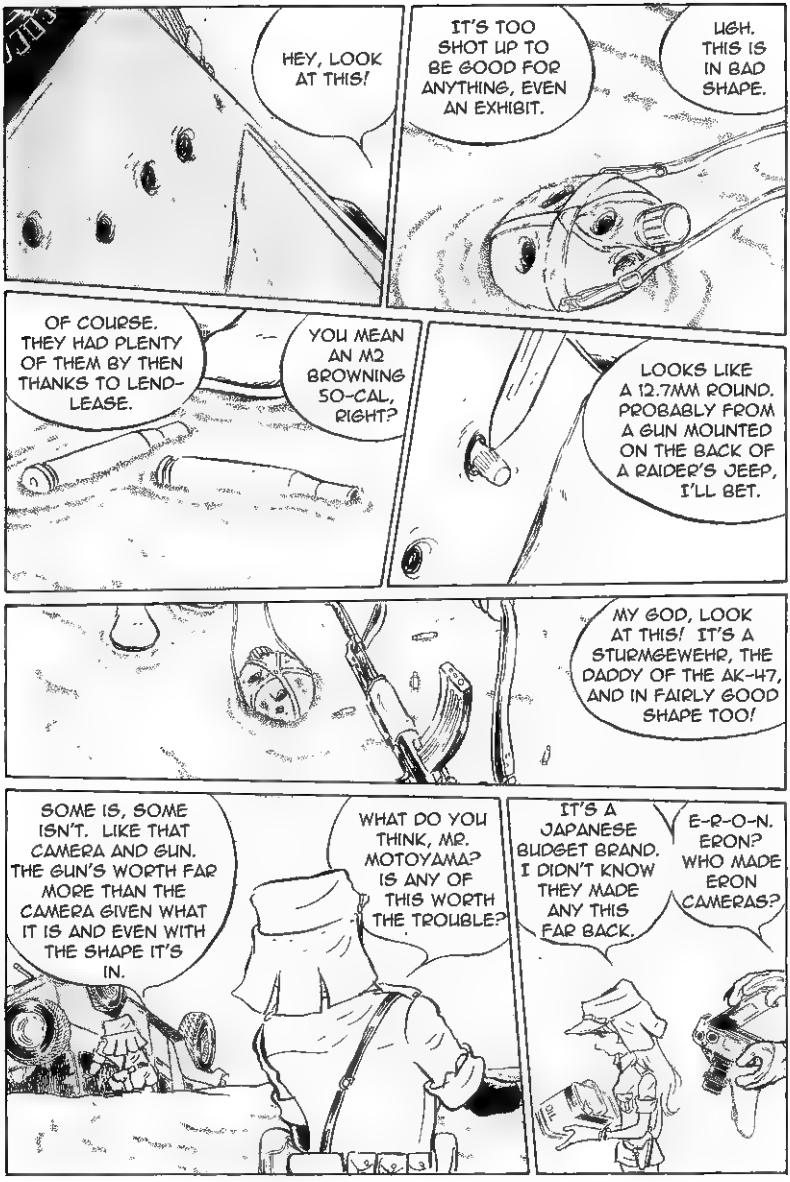
HERE'S SOMETHING YOU WON'T FIND IN MOST PRIVATE COLLECTIONS OF MILITARY GEAR. IT'S ONE OF THE VERY FIRST HAND GRENADES. DON'T WORRY! IT'S JUST AN EMPTY SHELL. IT'S BRITISH, ITS FORMAL NAME IS THE "MILLS" HAND GRENADE, AND IT WAS INVENTED IN 1915 FOR THE FIRST WORLD WAR. IRONIC, HOW IT LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE MODERN GRENADES, ISN'T IT? THAT'S THE THING ABOUT GOOD WEAPONS. THEY NEVER REALLY GO OUT OF STYLE. THEY GET REFINED AND UPGRADED FOR THE TIMES, BUT THEY NEVER GO OUT OF STYLE.

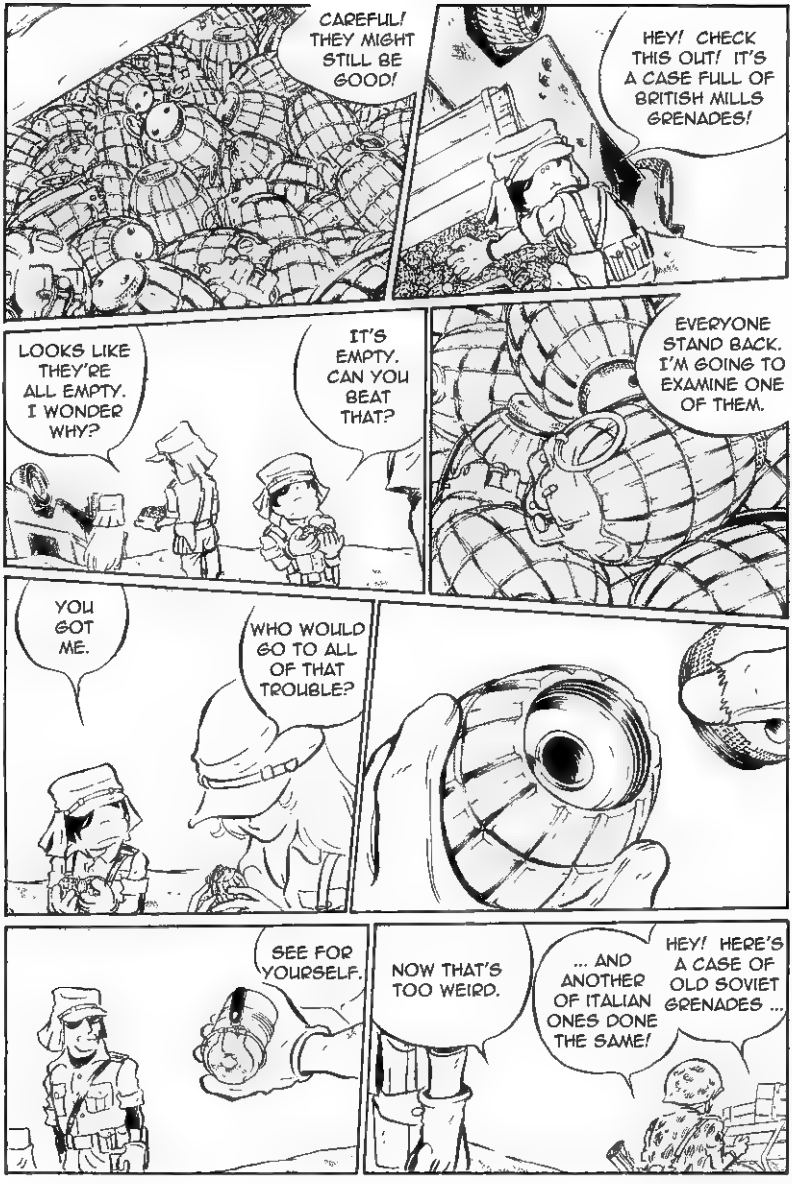
"THE BLACK DEVIL," THEY CALLED IT WHEN IT FIRST CAME OUT. YOU CAN SEE WHY. IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE THEY CAME UP WITH A RIFLE-FIRED VERSION IN 1916 TO BETTER "REACH OUT AND TOUCH SOMEONE" TO BORROW THE AMERICAN EXPRESSION. THEY CONTINUED TO IMPROVE ON IT BOTH DURING AND AFTER THE WAR. AS A MATTER OF FACT THE BRITISH TYPE 30M GRENADE, ITS DIRECT DESCENDANT, WOULD SEE USE THOUGHOUT THE SECOND WORLD WAR AND BEYOND.

MAZE MAP

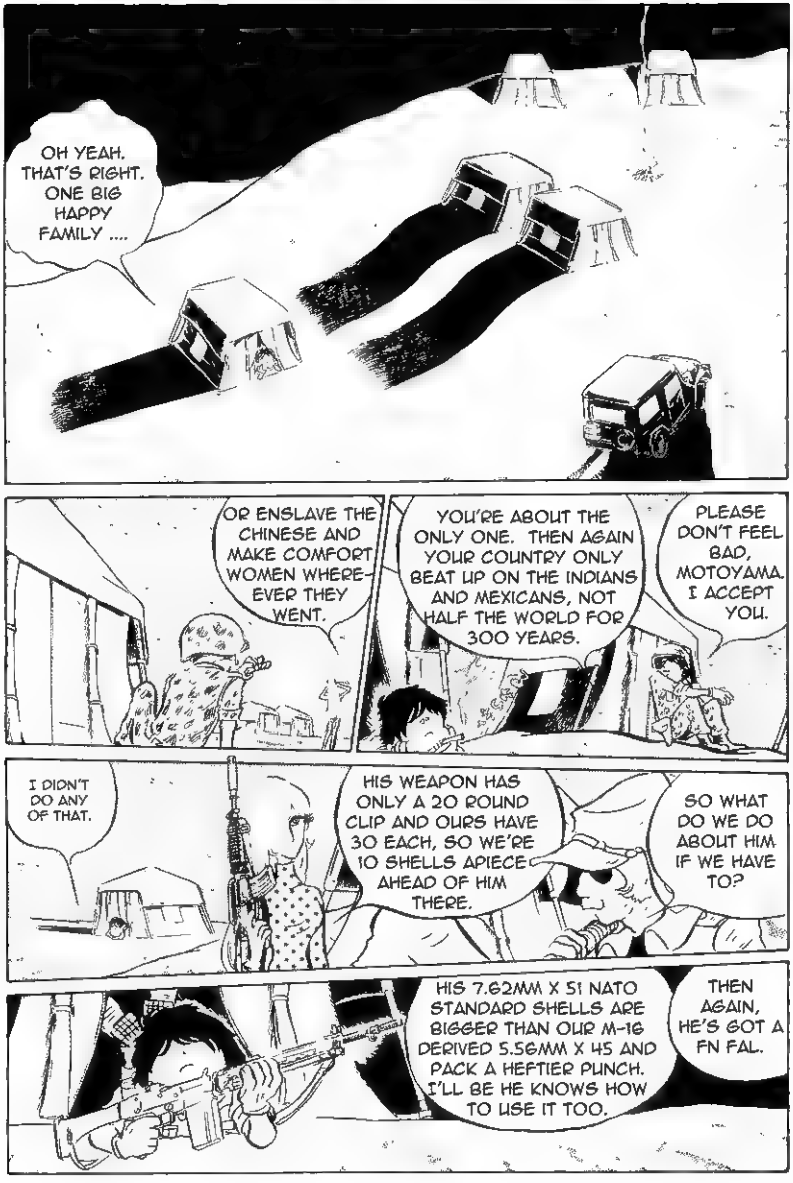
THIS PARTICULAR MILLS HAND GRENADE ONCE BELONGED TO A LATE BRITISH AVIATOR WHO WAS FORCED TO MAKE A CRASH LANDING IN NORTH AFRICA DURING WORLD WAR II. WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW ITS STORY? THEN I'LL TELL YOU ....


ITS LATE OWNER HAD APPARENTLY BEEN IN THE ACT OF TRYING TO THROW IT WHEN HE WAS KILLED. HE NEVER GOT THE CHANCE TO PULL THE PIN.
IT THEN LAY THERE IN THE DESERT SAND FOR FOUR MORE DECADES, THE PIN STILL UNPULLED, WAITING TO BE FOUND.
THE ACTION OF THE DESERT DURING THAT TIME REDUCED THE CORPSE OF THAT PILOT TO BONES BUT HIS UNTHROWN GRENADE REMAINED.
IT WOULD REMAIN THERE UNTIL 1981, WHEN IT WAS FOUND ALONG WITH MANY OTHER WORLD WAR II ARTIFACTS BY A JOINT EXPEDITION TO THE OLD EL ALAMEIN BATTLEFIELD, THERE TO PICK THROUGH ITS REMAINS FOR ITS OWN PURPOSES.


HEY, LOOK AT THIS!
IT'S TOO SHOT UP TO BE GOOD FOR ANYTHING, EVEN AN EXHIBIT.
UGH. THIS IS IN BAD SHAPE.
OF COURSE. THEY HAD PLENTY OF THEM BY THEN THANKS TO LEND-LEASE.
YOU MEAN AN M2 BROWNING 50-CAL, RIGHT?
LOOKS LIKE A 12.7MM ROUND. PROBABLY FROM A GUN MOUNTED ON THE BACK OF A RAIDER'S JEEP, I'LL BET.
MY GOD, LOOK AT THIS! IT'S A STURMGEWEHR, THE DADDY OF THE AK-47, AND IN FAIRLY GOOD SHAPE TOO!
SOME IS, SOME ISN'T. LIKE THAT CAMERA AND GUN. THE GUN'S WORTH FAR MORE THAN THE CAMERA GIVEN WHAT IT IS AND EVEN WITH THE SHAPE IT'S IN.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, MR. MOTOYAMA? IS ANY OF THIS WORTH THE TROUBLE?
IT'S A JAPANESE BUDGET BRAND. I DIDN'T KNOW THEY MADE ANY THIS FAR BACK.
E-R-O-N. ERON? WHO MADE ERON CAMERAS?


CAREFUL! THEY MIGHT STILL BE GOOD!
HEY! CHECK THIS OUT! IT'S A CASE FULL OF BRITISH MILLS GRENADES!
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE ALL EMPTY. I WONDER WHY?
IT'S EMPTY. CAN YOU BEAT THAT?
EVERYONE STAND BACK. I'M GOING TO EXAMINE ONE OF THEM.
YOU GOT ME.
WHO WOULD GO TO ALL OF THAT TROUBLE?
SEE FOR YOURSELF.
NOW THAT'S TOO WEIRD.
... AND ANOTHER OF ITALIAN ONES DONE THE SAME!
HEY! HERE'S A CASE OF OLD SOVIET GRENADES ...

WHICH IS NO SURPRISE, GIVEN THE ITALIAN TRACK RECORD IN NORTH AFRICA PRIOR TO ROMMEL'S ARRIVAL.
THERE'S 200 OF THEM. THEY LOOK LIKE THEY WERE NEVER USED.
IT'S AN ITALIAN HAND GRENADE, THE ONE THEY CALL THE RED DEVIL. IT'S A MATCH FOR THE BRITISH MILLS, THE BLACK DEVIL.
WHICH ONE IS THIS?
YOU DO THAT, BUT DON'T FORGET ROMMEL GOT HIS ASS WHIPPED BY MONTGOMERY HERE AT EL ALAMEIN.
ME, I'LL STICK WITH THE GOOD OL' GERMAN STILHANDGRANTE. THAT'S "STICK GRENADE" TO YOU CHAPS.
OH LET IT GO YOU GUYS! THAT'S ALL ANCIENT HISTORY NOW! WE'RE NOT HERE TO REFIGHT THE WAR!
F*CKIN' JAP!
AM I RIGHT OR AM I RIGHT, EARL OF FLINTBATTEN?
AND WITHOUT LOTS OF AMERICAN SUPPORT ROMMEL WOULD HAVE PUSHED YOU BRITS INTO THE SEA.
THANKS! AS LONG AS IT'S CLOSE! OH, I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED! "MADE IN JAPAN!" HMM! IT'S GREAT THAT THE WAR IS LONG OVER AND WE'RE FRIENDLY RIVALS NOW.
WANT SOME, MOTOYAMA? IT'S KIND OF LIKE BEEF SUKIYAKI.
BACK TO THE PRESENT. LIKE EVERYONE ELSE HERE, I CAME AT THE REQUEST OF THE HELL ARCHAEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION, AND SINCE WE'RE ALL HERE THEN WE'RE ALL ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY.
THAT'S KINDA THE WAY IT WAS BEFORE THE WAR TOO, EH? AS I SAID, THAT'S ALL IN THE PAST. LET'S LEAVE IT THERE.


OH YEAH. THAT'S RIGHT. ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY ....
OR ENSLAVE THE CHINESE AND MAKE COMFORT WOMEN WHEREEVER THEY WENT.
YOU'RE ABOUT THE ONLY ONE. THEN AGAIN YOUR COUNTRY ONLY BEAT UP ON THE INDIANS AND MEXICANS, NOT HALF THE WORLD FOR 300 YEARS.
PLEASE DON'T FEEL BAD, MOTOYAMA. I ACCEPT YOU.
I DIDN'T DO ANY OF THAT.
HIS WEAPON HAS ONLY A 20 ROUND CLIP AND OURS HAVE 30 EACH, SO WE'RE 10 SHELLS APIECE AHEAD OF HIM THERE.
SO WHAT DO WE DO ABOUT HIM IF WE HAVE TO?
HIS 7.62MM X 51 NATO STANDARD SHELLS ARE BIGGER THAN OUR M-16 DERIVED 5.56MM X 45 AND PACK A HEFTIER PUNCH. I'LL BE HE KNOWS HOW TO USE IT TOO.
THEN AGAIN, HE'S GOT A FN FAL.

YES, IT TOOK A WHILE TO WORK THE BUGS OUT OF THE ORIGINAL M-16, BUT IN ITS MODERN FORMS IT'S A FINE WEAPON.
ME, I PREFER THE LIGHTER 5.56MM NATO ROUND, OR .223 CALIBER IN AMERICAN TERMS. I CAN FIRE A LOT AND I CAN CARRY A LOT TOO.
OF COURSE THAT'S MY OPINION. THERE FOLKS LIKE ME WHO SWEAR BY 7.62MM AND LIKE YOU WHO SWEAR BY 5.56MM. NATO ALLOWS FOR BOTH, EVERYONE HAPPY.
5.56MM IS A AMERICAN IMPOSITION SUPPORTED BY THE JAPANESE.
ON THE OTHER HAND, MOST OF NATO STILL GOES WITH 7.62MM. GERMANY, BRITAIN, FRANCE -- YOU NAME 'EM, THEY USE IT.
HERE IN THE DESERT, THOUGH, WITH FEW PLACES TO HIDE, 7.62MM MIGHT BE BETTER.
REMINDS ME OF MY TIME IN 'NAM. BOY, DID WE DO A LOT OF SPRAYING WITH OUR M-16S!
IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHAT YOU WANT TO DO: EITHER SHOOT A HEAVY ROUND STRAIGHT OR SPRAY LOTS OF LITTLE ONES.
BUT ENOUGH OF THE GUN TALK. JEAN, HAND OUT THE COPIES OF THAT MAP.
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE RUINS OF A LOST CITY THAT THEY FOUND DURING THEIR EARLY CAMPAIGNS OUT HERE, BEFORE THE GERMANS GOT INVOLVED.
THIS SPOT HERE IS WHERE WE WANT TO GO.
THIS WAS COPIED FROM AN OLD ITALIAN MAP FROM THE WAR.

... NEAR HIS REMAINS. HE WAS ABOUT TO TOSS IT WHEN HE WAS KILLED.

THE ORIGINAL WAS FOUND IN THE DESERT NEAR A WRECKED BRITISH PLANE. BELIEVE IT OR NOT, IT WAS INSIDE AN OLD MILLS GRENADE ...

THAT'S WHERE THOSE HOLLOWED OUT GRENADES COME IN. EACH WAS SUPPOSED TO HOLD A MAP SECTION.

WE DON'T KNOW WHO DID IT OR WHY. ALL WE KNOW COMES FROM THIS MAP AND THE FACT THAT THE GUN FOUND IN HIS HAND HAD BEEN FIRED TWICE. THAT ALL I CAN TELL YOU ABOUT THIS MAP SAVE FOR ONE MORE THING ...

... THIS IS ONLY PART OF THE FULL MAP.

... SO AS YOU WENT YOU COULD PICK UP THE NEXT PART OF THE MAP.

THEY WERE APPARENTLY MEANT TO BE PLACED ALONG THE WAY ...

... BECAUSE IT WILL HAVE THE NEXT PART OF THE MAP SHOWING US WHERE TO GO NEXT TO FIND THIS LOST CITY.

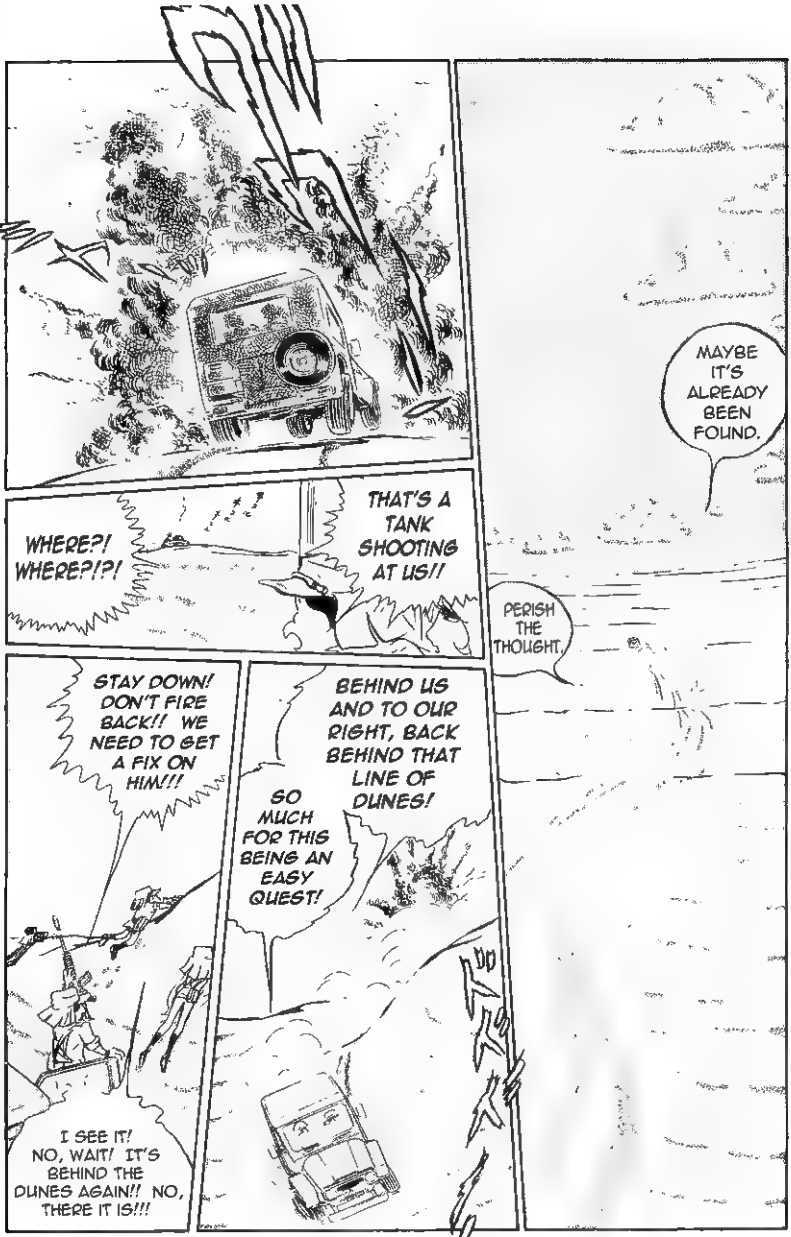
WE'VE GOT TO LOOK FOR A GRENADE LIKE THIS WHENEVER OUR MAP RUNS OUT ...

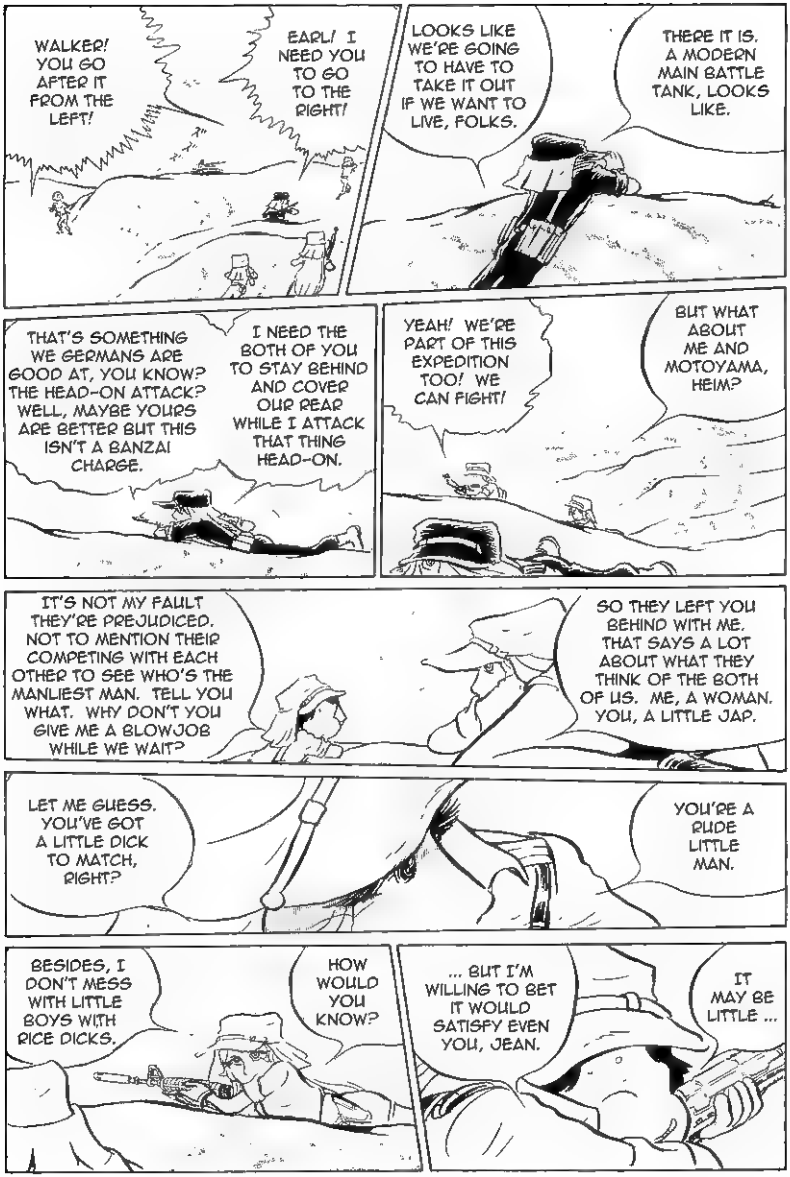
THE THING IS, EVERY PREVIOUS EFFORT HAS EITHER ENDED IN FAILURE OR SIMPLY DISAPPEARED.

HERE'S THE THING, FOLKS. WE'RE NOT THE FIRST TO BE SENT TO FIND THE CITY.

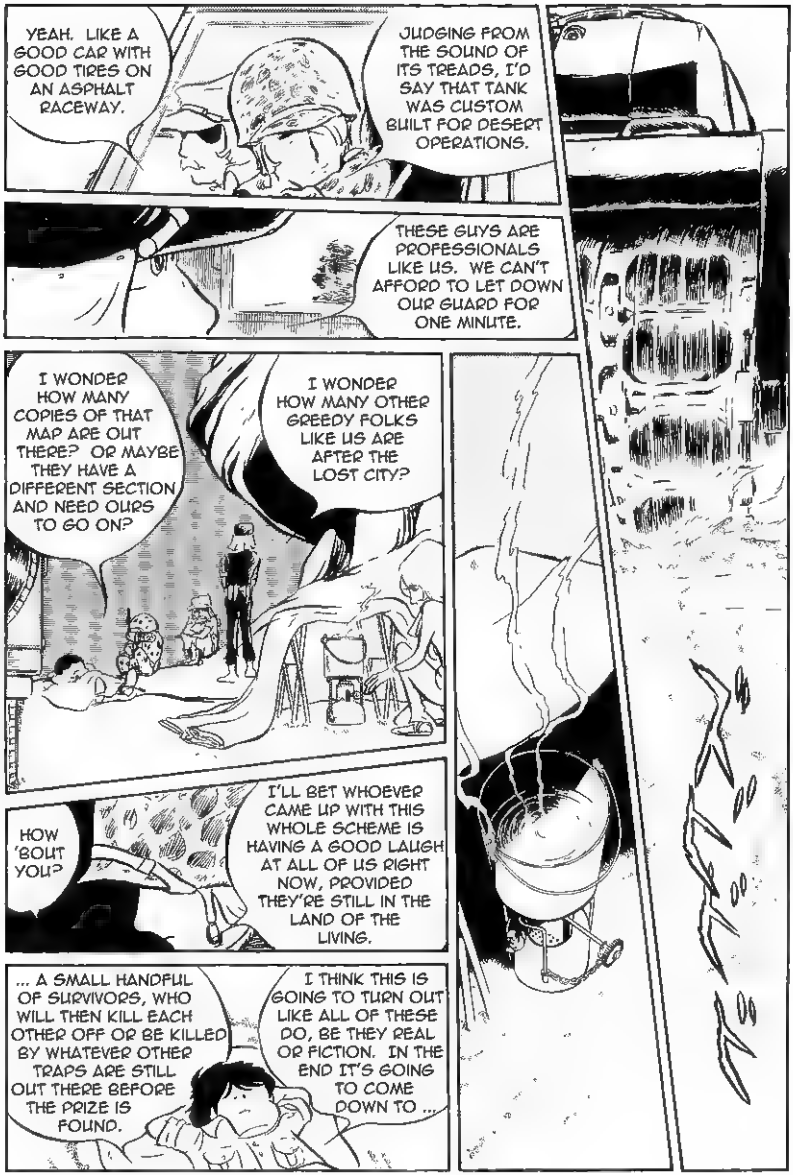
IT'S QUITE POSSIBLE THAT SOME OF THE MAP SECTIONS ARE MISSING.

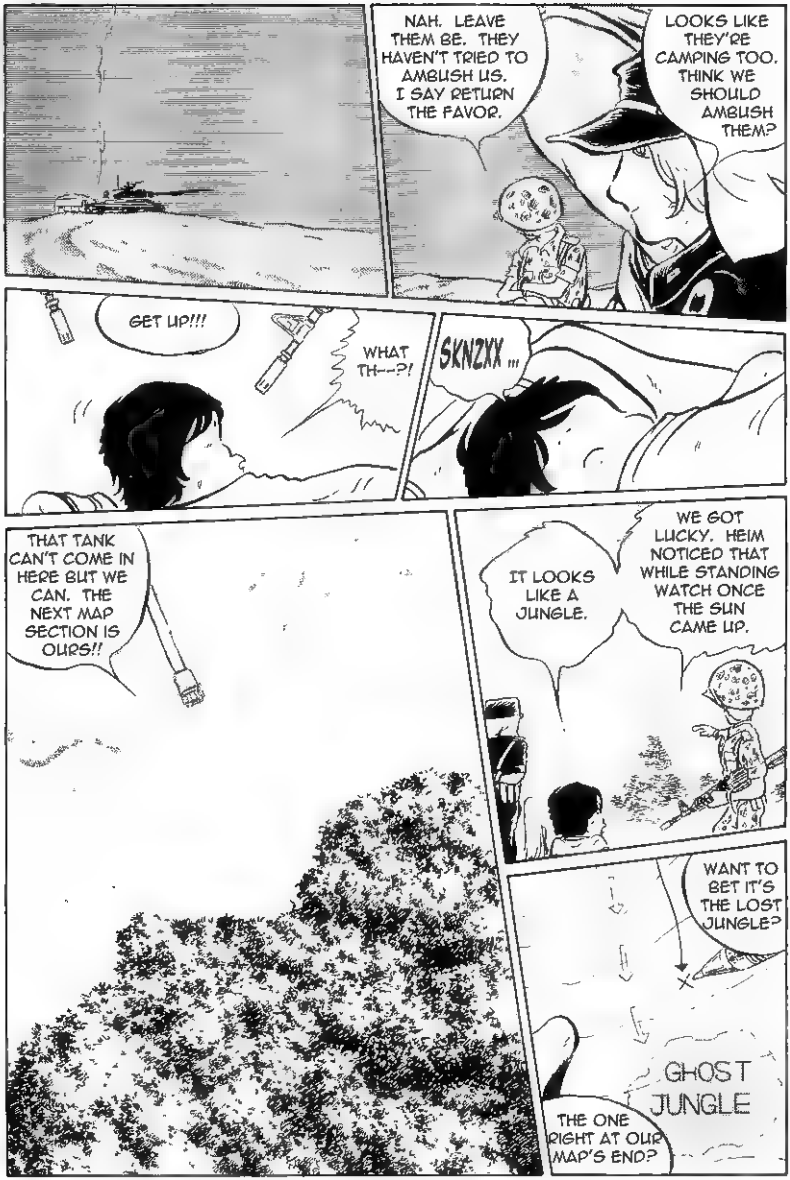
DESERT NOMADS OR OTHERS FINDING AND PICKING UP THOSE OLD HOLLOWED-OUT GRENADES. THAT OR THE SAND SHIFING OUT OF POSITION OVER TIME AND MOVING THEM.

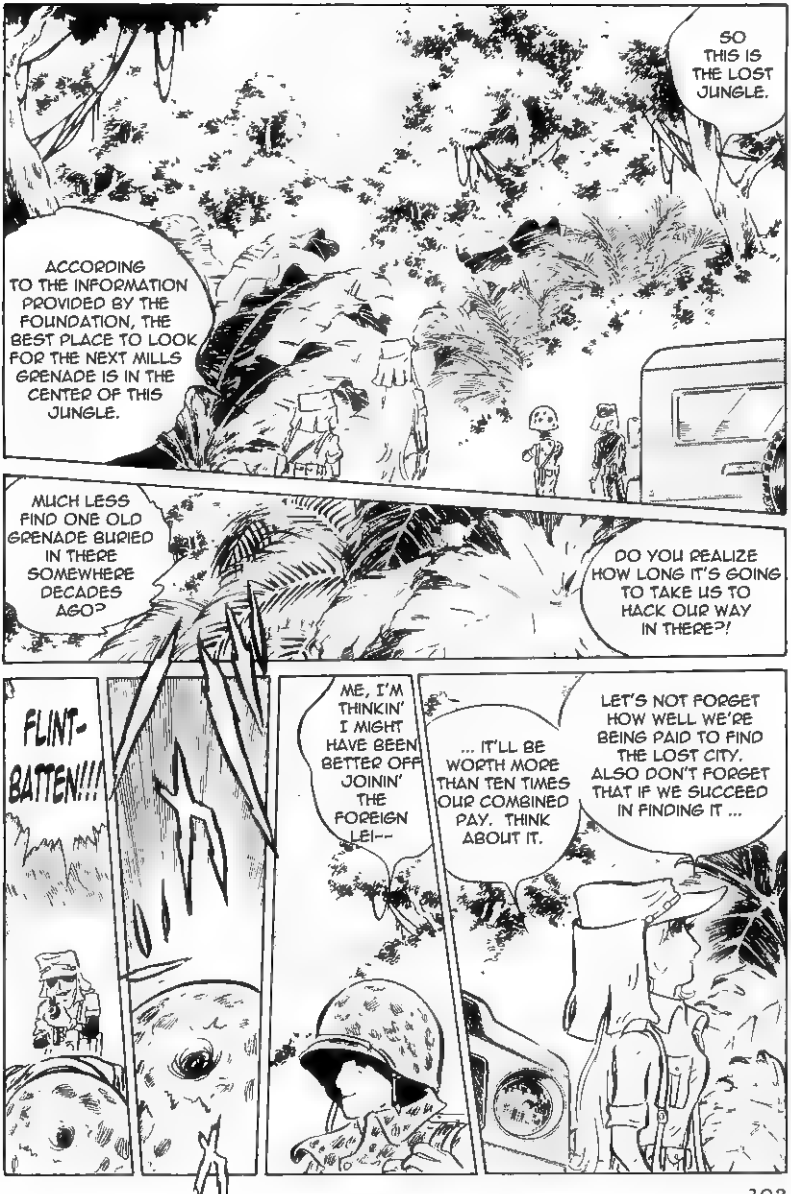

MAYBE IT'S ALREADY BEEN FOUND.
PERISH THE THOUGHT.
THAT'S A TANK SHOOTING AT US!!
WHERE?! WHERE?!?!
BEHIND US AND TO OUR RIGHT, BACK BEHIND THAT LINE OF DUNES!
SO MUCH FOR THIS BEING AN EASY QUEST!
STAY DOWN! DON'T FIRE BACK!! WE NEED TO GET A FIX ON HIM!!!
I SEE IT! NO, WAIT! IT'S BEHIND THE DUNES AGAIN!! NO, THERE IT IS!!!


WALKER! YOU GO AFTER IT FROM THE LEFT!
EARL! I NEED YOU TO GO TO THE RIGHT!
LOOKS LIKE WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO TAKE IT OUT IF WE WANT TO LIVE, FOLKS.
THERE IT IS. A MODERN MAIN BATTLE TANK, LOOKS LIKE.
THAT'S SOMETHING WE GERMANS ARE GOOD AT, YOU KNOW? THE HEAD-ON ATTACK? WELL, MAYBE YOURS ARE BETTER BUT THIS ISN'T A BANZAI CHARGE.
I NEED THE BOTH OF YOU TO STAY BEHIND AND COVER OUR REAR WHILE I ATTACK THAT THING HEAD-ON.
YEAH! WE'RE PART OF THIS EXPEDITION TOO! WE CAN FIGHT!
BUT WHAT ABOUT ME AND MOTOYAMA, HEIM?
IT'S NOT MY FAULT THEY'RE PREJUDICED. NOT TO MENTION THEIR COMPETING WITH EACH OTHER TO SEE WHO'S THE MANLIEST MAN. TELL YOU WHAT. WHY DON'T YOU GIVE ME A BLOWJOB WHILE WE WAIT?
SO THEY LEFT YOU BEHIND WITH ME. THAT SAYS A LOT ABOUT WHAT THEY THINK OF THE BOTH OF US. ME, A WOMAN. YOU, A LITTLE JAP.
LET ME GUESS. YOU'VE GOT A LITTLE DICK TO MATCH, RIGHT?
YOU'RE A RUDE LITTLE MAN.
BESIDES, I DON'T MESS WITH LITTLE BOYS WITH RICE DICKS.
HOW WOULD YOU KNOW?
... BUT I'M WILLING TO BET IT WOULD SATISFY EVEN YOU, JEAN.
IT MAY BE LITTLE ...

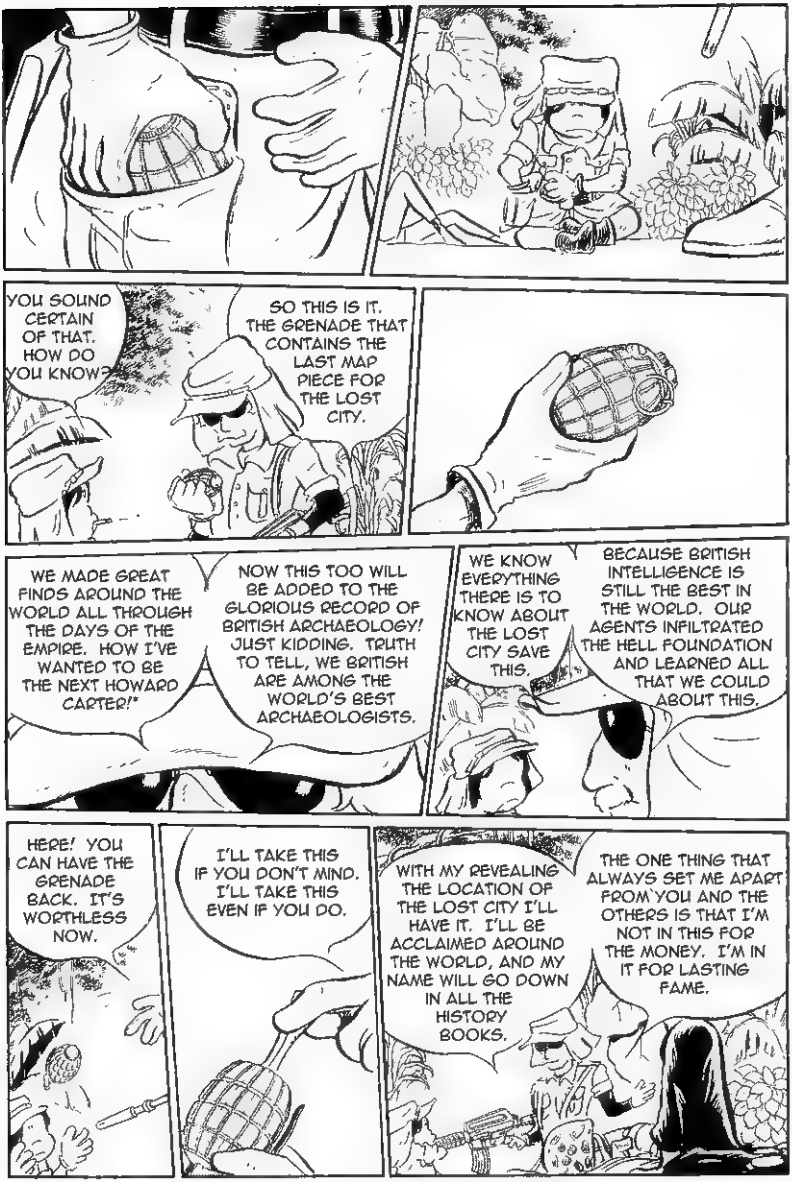
YEP. NOT A STANDARD TANK DESIGN BUT IT PACKS A 120MM MAIN GUN FOR ITS PUNCH.
IT'S WALKER! DID YOU GET A GOOD LOOK AT IT?
I ONLY SAW TWO, A DRIVER AND GUNNER. MIXED NATIONALITIES, PROBABLY LIKE US.
COULD YOU TELL WHO'S OPERATING IT?
SO WE'RE NOT THE ONLY GROUP LOOKING FOR THE LOST CITY THIS TIME.
I HOPE I SURVIVE THIS. I'D LIKE TO BE ABLE TO GO HOME AGAIN WHEN WE'RE DONE.
SO WHAT NOW? KEEP RUNNING? CALL FOR RETRIEVAL?


YEAH. LIKE A GOOD CAR WITH GOOD TIRES ON AN ASPHALT RACEWAY.
JUDGING FROM THE SOUND OF ITS TREADS, I'D SAY THAT TANK WAS CUSTOM BUILT FOR DESERT OPERATIONS.
THESE GUYS ARE PROFESSIONALS LIKE US. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO LET DOWN OUR GUARD FOR ONE MINUTE.
I WONDER HOW MANY COPIES OF THAT MAP ARE OUT THERE? OR MAYBE THEY HAVE A DIFFERENT SECTION AND NEED OURS TO GO ON?
I WONDER HOW MANY OTHER GREEDY FOLKS LIKE US ARE AFTER THE LOST CITY?
HOW 'BOUT YOU?
I'LL BET WHOEVER CAME UP WITH THIS WHOLE SCHEME IS HAVING A GOOD LAUGH AT ALL OF US RIGHT NOW, PROVIDED THEY'RE STILL IN THE LAND OF THE LIVING.
... A SMALL HANDFUL OF SURVIVORS, WHO WILL THEN KILL EACH OTHER OFF OR BE KILLED BY WHATEVER OTHER TRAPS ARE STILL OUT THERE BEFORE THE PRIZE IS FOUND.
I THINK THIS IS GOING TO TURN OUT LIKE ALL OF THESE DO, BE THEY REAL OR FICTION. IN THE END IT'S GOING TO COME DOWN TO ...

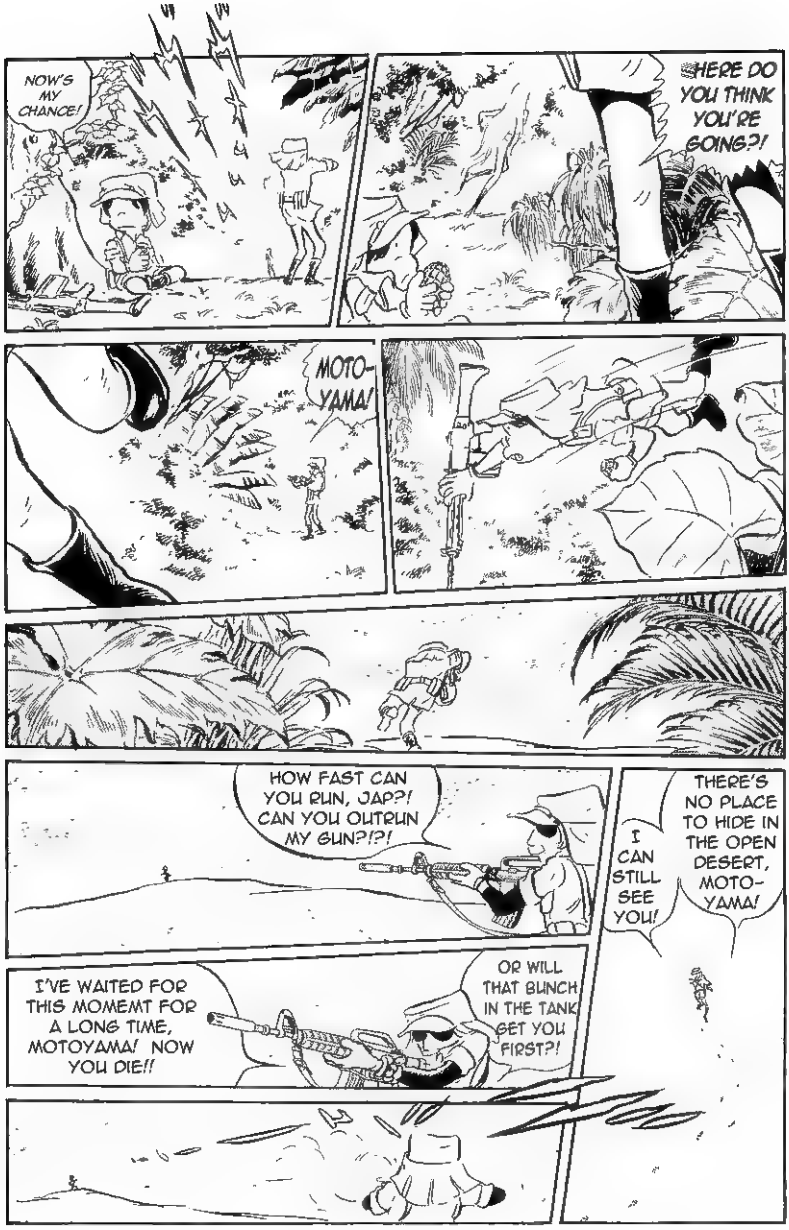

NAH. LEAVE THEM BE. THEY HAVEN'T TRIED TO AMBUSH US. I SAY RETURN THE FAVOR.
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE CAMPING TOO. THINK WE SHOULD AMBUSH THEM?
GET UP!!!
WHAT TH--?!
SKNZXX...
THAT TANK CAN'T COME IN HERE BUT WE CAN. THE NEXT MAP SECTION IS OURS!!
IT LOOKS LIKE A JUNGLE.
WE GOT LUCKY. HEIM NOTICED THAT WHILE STANDING WATCH ONCE THE SUN CAME UP.
WANT TO BET IT'S THE LOST JUNGLE?
GHOST JUNGLE
THE ONE RIGHT AT OUR MAP'S END?


SO THIS IS THE LOST JUNGLE.
ACCORDING TO THE INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE FOUNDATION, THE BEST PLACE TO LOOK FOR THE NEXT MILLS GRENADE IS IN THE CENTER OF THIS JUNGLE.
DO YOU REALIZE HOW LONG IT'S GOING TO TAKE US TO HACK OUR WAY IN THERE?!
MUCH LESS FIND ONE OLD GRENADE BURIED IN THERE SOMEWHERE DECADES AGO?
FLINT-BATTEN!!!
ME, I'M THINKIN' I MIGHT HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF JOININ' THE FOREIGN LEI--
... IT'LL BE WORTH MORE THAN TEN TIMES OUR COMBINED PAY. THINK ABOUT IT.
LET'S NOT FORGET HOW WELL WE'RE BEING PAID TO FIND THE LOST CITY. ALSO DON'T FORGET THAT IF WE SUCCEED IN FINDING IT ...

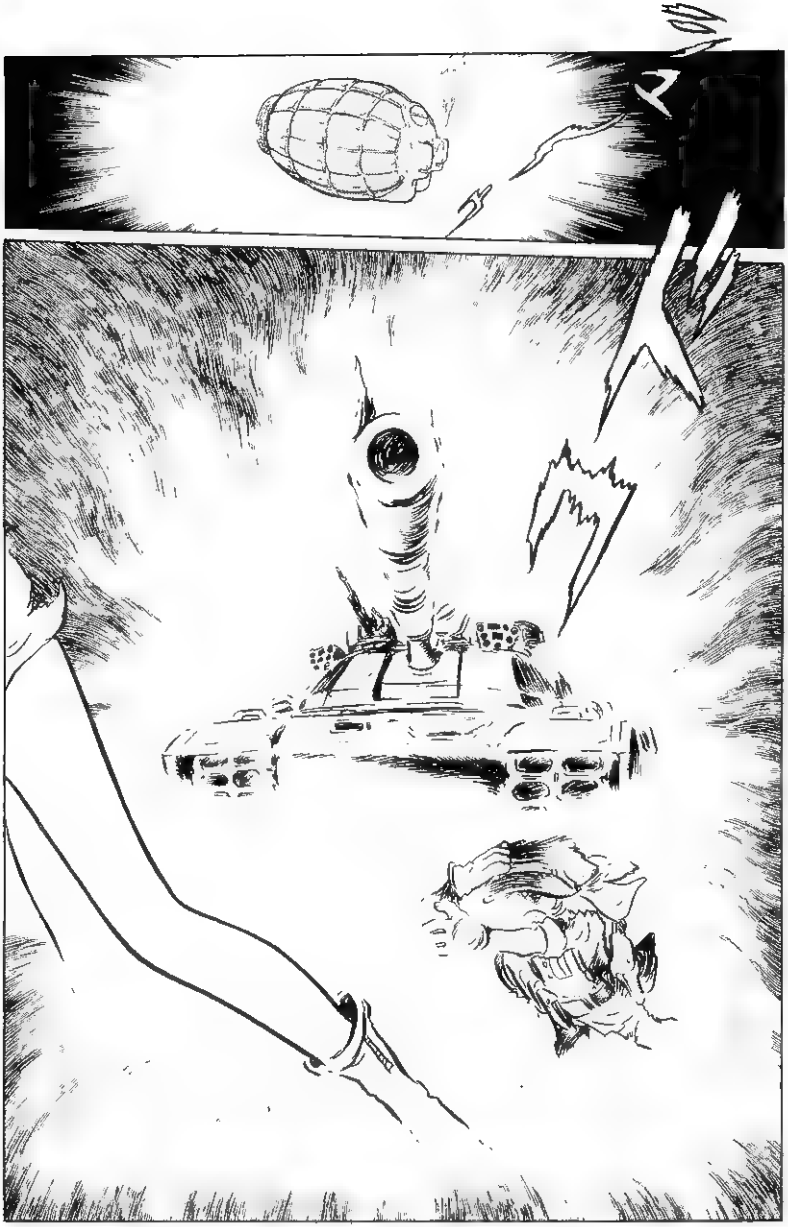
HNGH!!!
I KNOW YOU'VE ALREADY FOUND THE NEXT MILLS GRENADE. YOU SNEAKED OUT LAST NIGHT TO GET IT.
TAKE IT OUT OF YOUR POCKET. SLOWLY. ONE FALSE MOVE AND YOU'RE DEAD.
REMEMBER THE CRASH, AND THE MAN YOU LEFT BEHIND TO DIE IN THE BURNING WRECKAGE? I'M BACK.
YOU SEE, I WAS PART OF THE TRAN-SAHARA EXPEDITION IN 1976, THE SAME YOU WERE ON, ONLY I LOOKED QUITE DIFFERENT THEN.
AH, DOCTOR NOBORU MOTOYAMA! SURPRISED THAT I RECOGNIZED YOU?
YOU DID?


YOU SOUND CERTAIN OF THAT. HOW DO YOU KNOW?
SO THIS IS IT. THE GRENADE THAT CONTAINS THE LAST MAP PIECE FOR THE LOST CITY.
WE MADE GREAT FINDS AROUND THE WORLD ALL THROUGH THE DAYS OF THE EMPIRE. HOW I'VE WANTED TO BE THE NEXT HOWARD CARTER!"
NOW THIS TOO WILL BE ADDED TO THE GLORIOUS RECORD OF BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY! JUST KIDDING. TRUTH TO TELL, WE BRITISH ARE AMONG THE WORLD'S BEST ARCHAEOLOGISTS.
WE KNOW EVERYTHING THERE IS TO KNOW ABOUT THE LOST CITY SAVE THIS.
BECAUSE BRITISH INTELLIGENCE IS STILL THE BEST IN THE WORLD. OUR AGENTS INFILTRATED THE HELL FOUNDATION AND LEARNED ALL THAT WE COULD ABOUT THIS.
HERE! YOU CAN HAVE THE GRENADE BACK. IT'S WORTHLESS NOW.
I'LL TAKE THIS IF YOU DON'T MIND. I'LL TAKE THIS EVEN IF YOU DO.
WITH MY REVEALING THE LOCATION OF THE LOST CITY I'LL HAVE IT. I'LL BE ACCLAIMED AROUND THE WORLD, AND MY NAME WILL GO DOWN IN ALL THE HISTORY BOOKS.
THE ONE THING THAT ALWAYS SET ME APART FROM YOU AND THE OTHERS IS THAT I'M NOT IN THIS FOR THE MONEY. I'M IN IT FOR LASTING FAME.

(*) THE BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGIST WHO DISCOVERED THE TOMB OF KING TUTANKHAMEN IN EGYPT IN 1922.


NOW'S MY CHANCE!
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?!
MOTO-YAMA!
HOW FAST CAN YOU RUN, JAP?! CAN YOU OUTRUN MY GUN?!?!
I CAN STILL SEE YOU!
THERE'S NO PLACE TO HIDE IN THE OPEN DESERT, MOTO-YAMA!
I'VE WAITED FOR THIS MOMEMT FOR A LONG TIME, MOTOYAMA! NOW YOU DIE!!
OR WILL THAT BUNCH IN THE TANK GET YOU FIRST?!

... AND HAS A GUN WITH A HEAVIER SHELL THAT BOTH OUTRANGES AND OUT-PUNCHES YOURS!
YOU FORGET THIS DIRTY YELLOW RAT IS SMALL ...
GYAH!!!
I'LL BE TAKING THAT BACK, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
WITH THE MAP?!?
DON'T, MOTOYAMA! THAT'S THE GRENADE WITH THE MAP—
OH SHIT, THE TANK!



... AH ... AH ... THE FIRING ... MECHANISM ... WAS STILL ... GOOD ... LUCKY ... FOR US ... AH ... AH ...
... I ... I RELOADED ... THE GRENADE ... WITH SPARE ... GUNPOWDER ... WHEN HE ...
... DESTROYED ... IN THE ... AH ... BLAST ... AH ... ANYWAY ... IT'S LOST ... FOR GOOD ... AH ... AH ...
... IT'S ... NOT IN ... THE RIGHT PLACE ... ANYMORE ... AH ... AH ... AH ... NO ONE ... CAN FIND ... THE LOST ... CITY ... NOW ... AH ... AH ...
... BUT ... AH ... THE LAST ... AH ... MAP PIECE ... AH ... AH ...
I'M I'M FROM AAHHH AAAHHH
... BY THE WAY ... JEAN ... AH ... AH ... YOU ... NEVER ... SAID ... WHERE ... YOU'RE ... FROM ... AH ... AH ...

THERE IS A TALE OF A LEGENDARY LOST CITY, ONCE CONSIDERED A PARADISE ON EARTH, THAT IS LOCATED SOMEWHERE NEAR WHAT IS KNOWN AS THE LOST JUNGLE IN THE SOUTHERN SAHARA IN SOUTHEAST AFRICA.

MANY HAVE TRIED TO FIND IT. ALL HAVE FAILED.

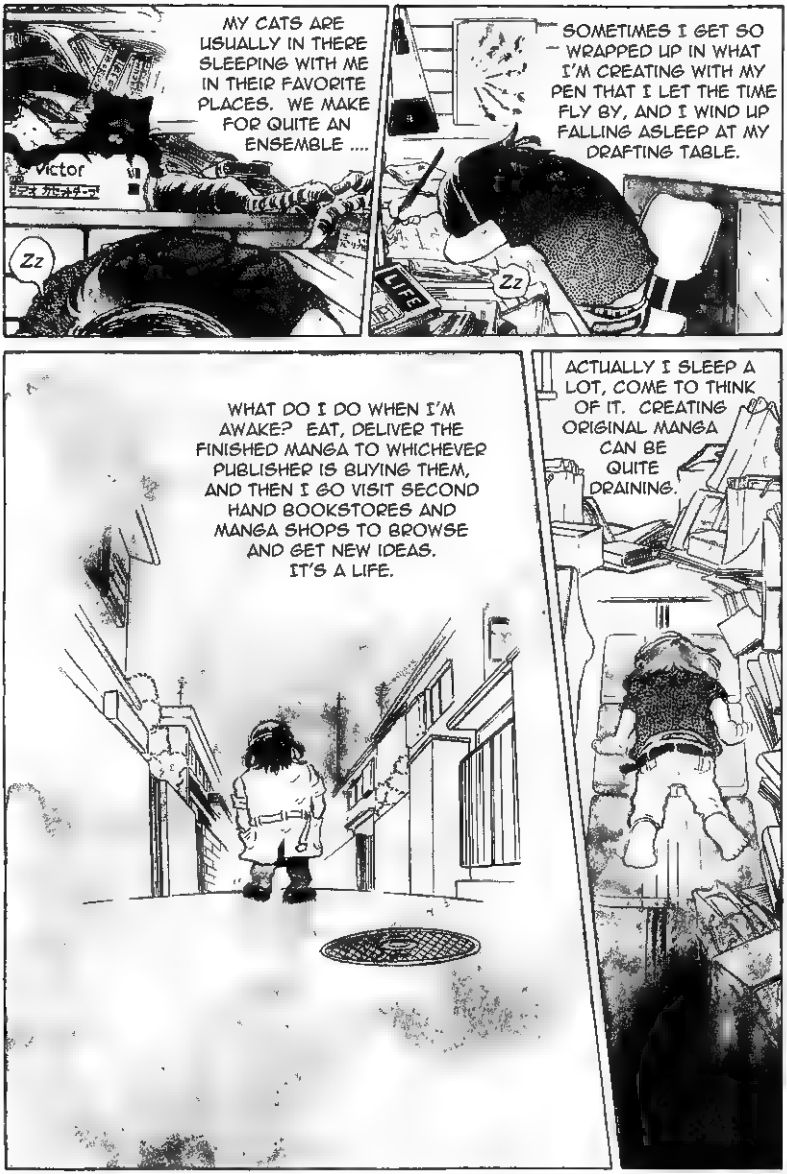
THERE WERE ONCE CLUES, EVEN PIECES OF A MAP, BUT THEY HAVE ALL SINCE BEEN SCATTERED OR LOST.

TODAY THEY ARE AS LOST AS IS THE LOST CITY.

Published in Big Comic, November 10, 1981 issue

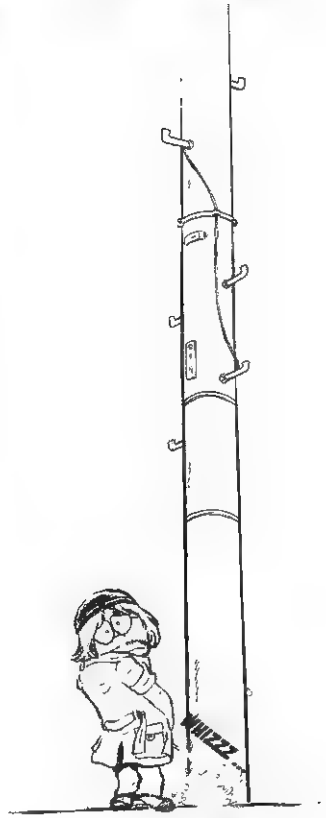
THE
LEIJI
MATSUMOTO
PRESENTS
COCKPIT

OH! GOOD MORNING! OR "OHAYO GOZAIMASU" AS WE SAY IN JAPAN. YES IT'S ME, AKIRA, AND YOU SEE ME AS I AM MOST OF THE TIME, CREATING AND DRAWING MY MANGA TALES. I'VE BEEN DRAWING MANGA ALL MY LIFE. I GET MY IDEAS FOR MY STORIES AND MY CHARACTERS FROM EVERYWHERE, INCLUDING MY OWN LIFE. THAT'S THE WAY A LOT OF US AUTHORS WORK. SPEAKING OF WHICH, HAVE I GOT A TALE TO TELL YOU THIS TIME ....


MY CATS ARE USUALLY IN THERE SLEEPING WITH ME IN THEIR FAVORITE PLACES. WE MAKE FOR QUITE AN ENSEMBLE ....
Victor
Zz
SOMETIMES I GET SO WRAPPED UP IN WHAT I'M CREATING WITH MY PEN THAT I LET THE TIME FLY BY, AND I WIND UP FALLING ASLEEP AT MY DRAFTING TABLE.
LIFE
Zz
WHAT DO I DO WHEN I'M AWAKE? EAT, DELIVER THE FINISHED MANGA TO WHICHEVER PUBLISHER IS BUYING THEM, AND THEN I GO VISIT SECOND HAND BOOKSTORES AND MANGA SHOPS TO BROWSE AND GET NEW IDEAS. IT'S A LIFE.
ACTUALLY I SLEEP A LOT, COME TO THINK OF IT. CREATING ORIGINAL MANGA CAN BE QUITE DRAINING.

WHERE MOUNT FUJI WAS

THESE DAYS USED BOOKS OF ANY KIND HAVE GOTTEN TERRIBLY EXPENSIVE. I GUESS IT'S THE ECONOMY. I NEVER BOTHERED WITH SUCH THINGS. ALL I KNOW IS THAT WHAT YEN* I HAVE WON'T BUY ME AS MANY BOOKS AS IT USED TO.

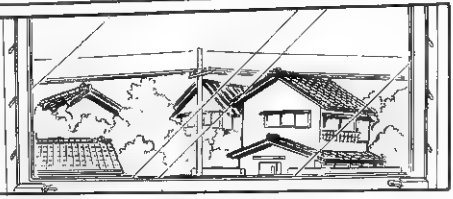


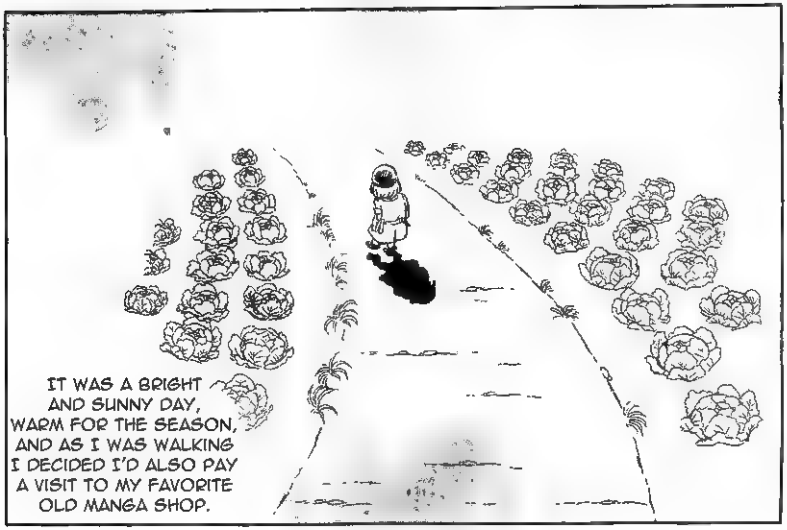
315 (*) YEN – THE BASE UNIT OF JAPANESE CURRENCY. AT THE TIME MATSUMOTO PUBLISHED THIS STORY (1981) THE OFFICIAL EXCHANGE RATE WAS ABOUT 220 YEN TO THE DOLLAR.

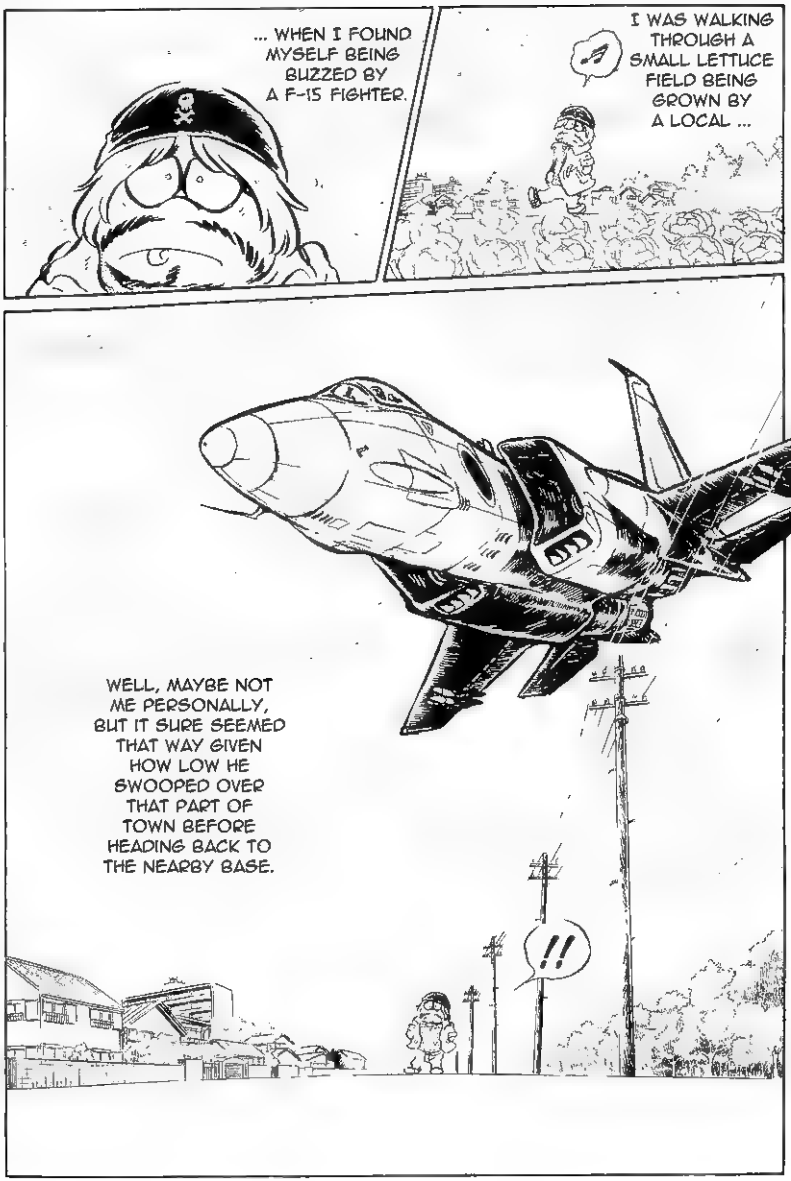
THERE ARE USED BOOKSHOPS ALL OVER TOKYO, BUT NOT ALL OF THEM CARRY OLD MANGA.
THERE ARE TIMES WHEN I HAVE TO TRAVEL QUITE A WAYS TO FIND WHATEVER I'M LOOKING FOR. I DON'T MIND. THAT'S HALF THE FUN.

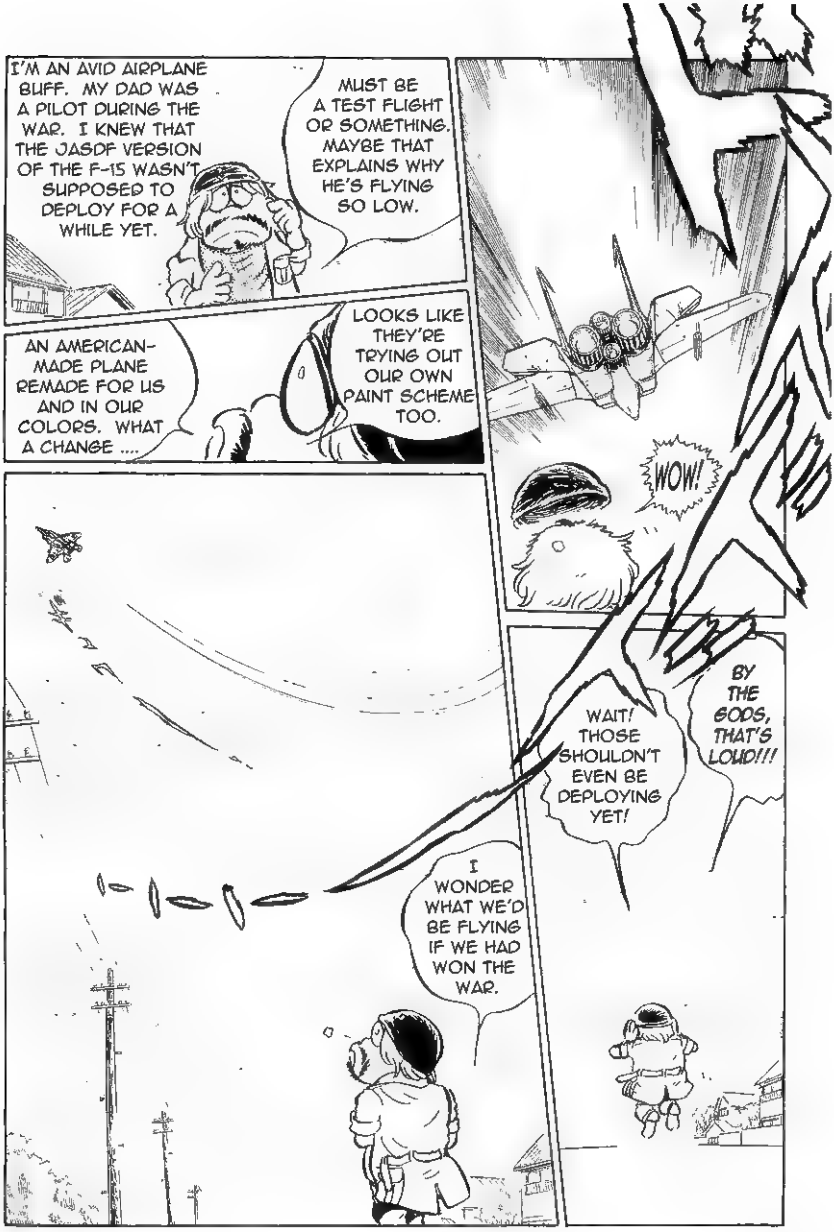
I'M WELL KNOWN AT ALL THAT DO. IN FACT, THERE'S ONE ON THE FAR SIDE OF TOWN THAT'S ONE OF MY FAVORITES.

ON OCTOBER 10, 1981, AROUND 3 PM LOCAL TIME, I HAD JUST FINISHED READING THE MORNING PAPER WHEN I REALIZED I WAS HUNGRY. I DECIDED THAT WAS A GOOD EXCUSE TO GET OUT OF THE HOUSE.




IT WAS A BRIGHT AND SUNNY DAY, WARM FOR THE SEASON, AND AS I WAS WALKING I DECIDED I'D ALSO PAY A VISIT TO MY FAVORITE OLD MANGA SHOP.

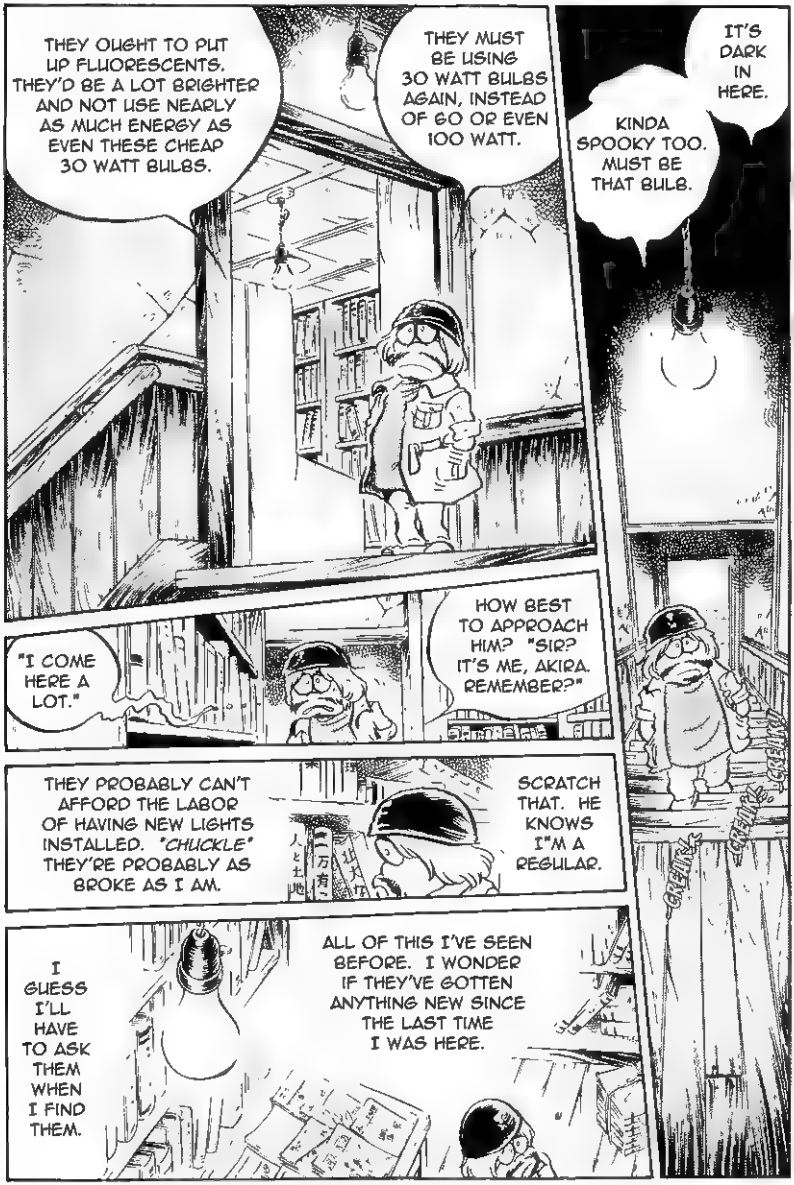

... WHEN I FOUND MYSELF BEING BUZZED BY A F-15 FIGHTER.
I WAS WALKING THROUGH A SMALL LETTUCE FIELD BEING GROWN BY A LOCAL ...
WELL, MAYBE NOT ME PERSONALLY, BUT IT SURE SEEMED THAT WAY GIVEN HOW LOW HE SWOOPED OVER THAT PART OF TOWN BEFORE HEADING BACK TO THE NEARBY BASE.
!!


I'M AN AVID AIRPLANE BUFF. MY DAD WAS A PILOT DURING THE WAR. I KNEW THAT THE JASDF VERSION OF THE F-15 WASN'T SUPPOSED TO DEPLOY FOR A WHILE YET.
MUST BE A TEST FLIGHT OR SOMETHING. MAYBE THAT EXPLAINS WHY HE'S FLYING SO LOW.
LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE TRYING OUT OUR OWN PAINT SCHEME TOO.
AN AMERICAN-MADE PLANE REMADE FOR US AND IN OUR COLORS. WHAT A CHANGE ....
WOW!
BY THE GODS, THAT'S LOUD!!!
WAIT! THOSE SHOULDN'T EVEN BE DEPLOYING YET!
I WONDER WHAT WE'D BE FLYING IF WE HAD WON THE WAR.

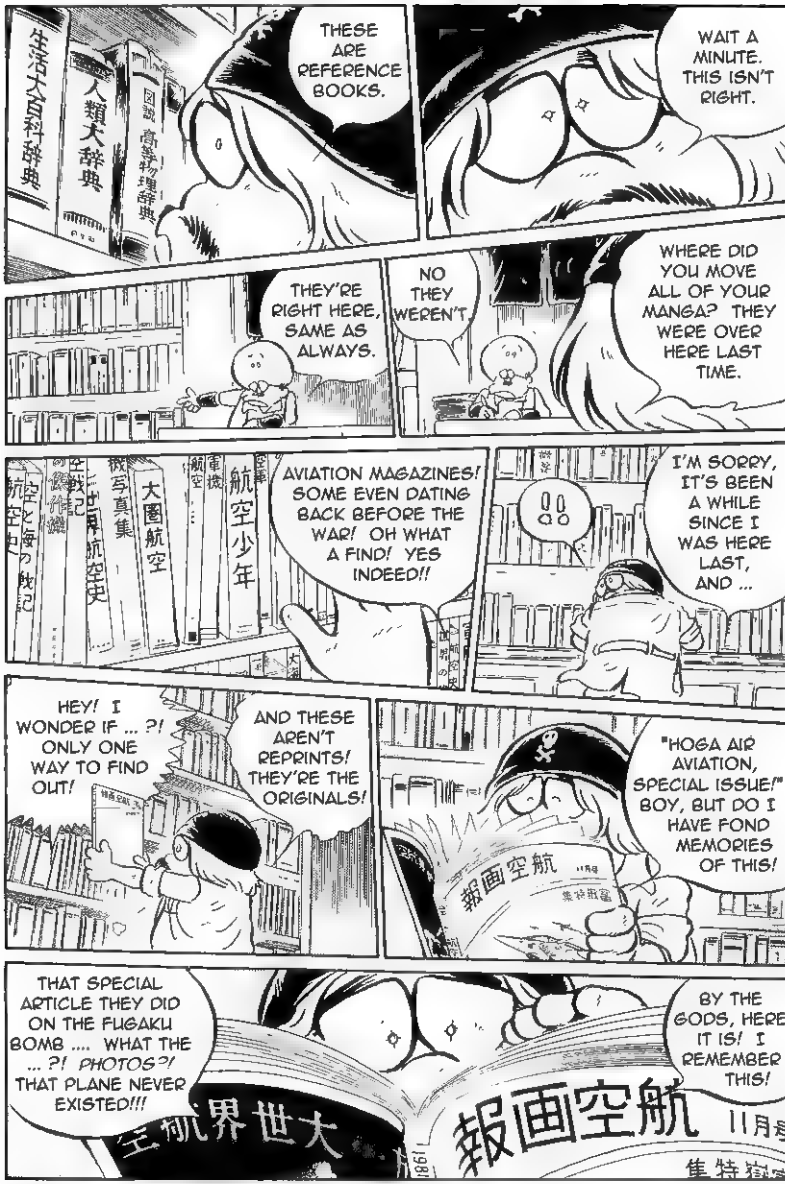
LV-3

I FILED THE ENCOUNTER AWAY FOR FUTURE REFERENCE. I THEN DECIDED TO VISIT THE OLD MANGA SHOP FIRST BEFORE GRABBING A BITE.
I'VE BEEN A FAN OF MANGA, OR COMIC BOOKS AS YOU WESTERNERS CALL THEM, EVER SINCE I WAS A LITTLE BOY. I BEGAN DRAWING MY OWN AS SOON AS I WAS ABLE, SO THAT BY THE TIME I WAS AN ADULT I GOT TO LIVE MY DREAM OF BECOMING A MANGAKA.*
人買価高書古
堂本古屋本古
大不動産
COFFEE
I HAD FOUND MANY AN OLD MANGA THERE I REMEMBERED FONDLY FROM MY YOUTH OR OTHERS HAD RECOMMENDED TO ME. YET AS I APPROACHED TODAY I SENSED THAT SOMETHING WAS DIFFERENT.
MY DESTINATION WAS THE HONKOYA BOOK SHOP. I KNEW IT WELL.
人買価高書古
堂本古屋本古
IT'S THEIR NEW SIGN! IT'S NOT DONE RIGHT! *SIGH* THE OLD MAN MUST HAVE DONE IT.
I'D BETTER VISIT WITH HIS WIFE, AND SEE IF SHE'D LIKE ME TO PAINT THEM A NEW SIGN.
WHAT TH-- ...? OH, I SEE!

(*) MANGAKA – NI. 'MANGA ARTIST," ONE WHO ILLUSTRATES OR CREATES MANGA.

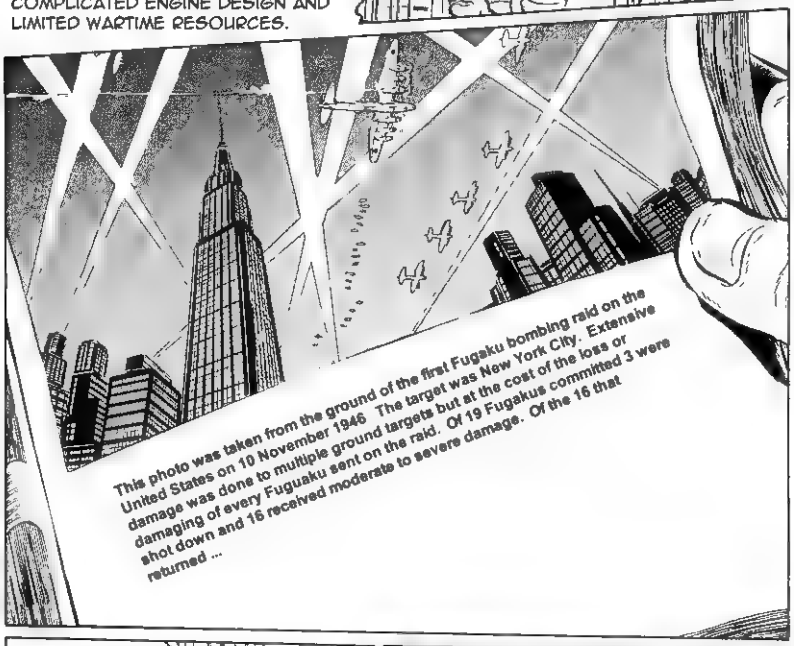

THEY OUGHT TO PUT UP FLUORESCENTS. THEY'D BE A LOT BRIGHTER AND NOT USE NEARLY AS MUCH ENERGY AS EVEN THESE CHEAP 30 WATT BULBS.
THEY MUST BE USING 30 WATT BULBS AGAIN, INSTEAD OF 60 OR EVEN 100 WATT.
IT'S DARK IN HERE.
KINDA SPOOKY TOO. MUST BE THAT BULB.
"I COME HERE A LOT."
HOW BEST TO APPROACH HIM? "SIR? IT'S ME, AKIRA. REMEMBER?"
THEY PROBABLY CAN'T AFFORD THE LABOR OF HAVING NEW LIGHTS INSTALLED. *"CHUCKLE"* THEY'RE PROBABLY AS BROKE AS I AM.
SCRATCH THAT. HE KNOWS I'M A REGULAR.
I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO ASK THEM WHEN I FIND THEM.
ALL OF THIS I'VE SEEN BEFORE. I WONDER IF THEY'VE GOTTEN ANYTHING NEW SINCE THE LAST TIME I WAS HERE.
GRRITK
GRRITK

THAT OLD BOOK SHOP ISN'T THERE ANYMORE. IT'S LONG GONE, BUT BOY DO I REMEMBER MY MANY VISITS THERE, AND THE MANY MANGA I FREQUENTLY FOUND THERE ....
LOOKS LIKE THEY GOT A LOT OF NEW STUFF ....
AH! THIS IS MORE LIKE IT! EVERYTHING'S DIFFERENT FROM LAST TIME!
TRY STARTING WHERE YOU ARE.
I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START LOOKING. THERE'S SO MUCH!
YEP.
EXCUSE ME, SIR. LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A LOT OF NEW STUFF.
--AND IT PROBABLY GOT SOLD OUT FROM UNDER YOU. THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR WANDERING AROUND FOR THREE HOURS WITHOUT BUYING ANYTHING, MISTER AKIRA!
I THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING THE OTHER DAY--
BUT I KNOW WHAT YOU WANT, AND YOU'LL FIND IT IN THE SAME COUNTER AS BEFORE.

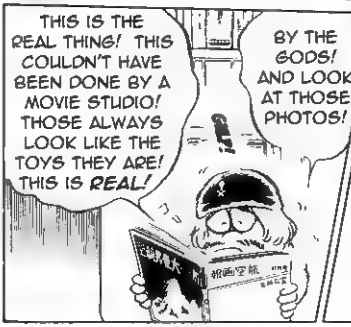

THESE ARE REFERENCE BOOKS.
WAIT A MINUTE. THIS ISN'T RIGHT.
生活大百科辞典
人類大辞典
図説 高等物理辞典
THEY'RE RIGHT HERE, SAME AS ALWAYS.
NO THEY WEREN'T.
WHERE DID YOU MOVE ALL OF YOUR MANGA? THEY WERE OVER HERE LAST TIME.
AVIATION MAGAZINES! SOME EVEN DATING BACK BEFORE THE WAR! OH WHAT A FIND! YES INDEED!!
航空少年
大圏航空
航空史
I'M SORRY, IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I WAS HERE LAST, AND ...
HEY! I WONDER IF ... ?! ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT!
AND THESE AREN'T REPRINTS! THEY'RE THE ORIGINALS!
"HOGA AIR AVIATION, SPECIAL ISSUE!" BOY, BUT DO I HAVE FOND MEMORIES OF THIS!
報画空航
THAT SPECIAL ARTICLE THEY DID ON THE FUGAKU BOMB .... WHAT THE ... ?! PHOTOS?! THAT PLANE NEVER EXISTED!!!
BY THE GODS, HERE IT IS! I REMEMBER THIS!
航界世大
報画空航
11月号

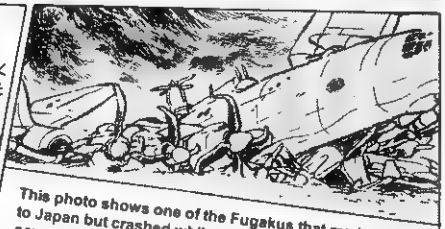
THE STORY OF THE NAKAJIMA G-10N FUGAKU HAS ALWAYS FASCINATED ME, LIKE A LOT OF OTHER "WHAT IF" STUFF FROM THE WAR. IT WAS THE BIGGEST BOMBER EVER CONCEIVED FOR THE JAPANESE AIR FORCE AT THE TIME AND WAS MEANT FOR BOMBING THE UNITED STATES. IT NEVER GOT BUILT DUE TO BOTH AN OVERLY COMPLICATED ENGINE DESIGN AND LIMITED WARTIME RESOURCES.

I'M SURE THESE AREN'T FAKES IF THEY'RE IN HOGA AVIATION!
THEY STILL SAY IT WAS NEVER BUILT, BUT IF SO THEN HOW WERE THESE PICTURES MADE?!

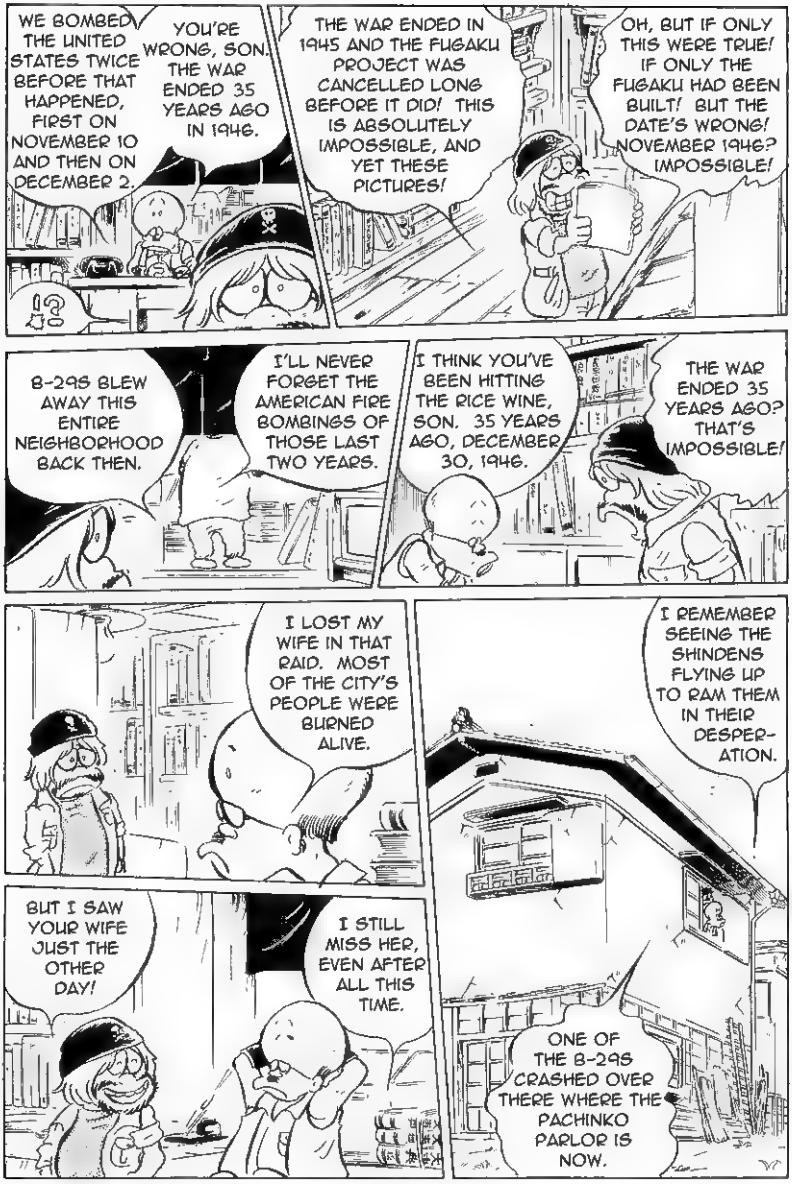


This photo was taken from the ground of the first Fugaku bombing raid on the United States on 10 November 1946. The target was New York City. Extensive damage was done to multiple ground targets but at the cost of the loss or damaging of every Fuguaku sent on the raid. Of 19 Fugakus committed 3 were shot down and 16 received moderate to severe damage. Of the 16 that returned ...


THIS IS THE REAL THING! THIS COULDN'T HAVE BEEN DONE BY A MOVIE STUDIO! THOSE ALWAYS LOOK LIKE THE TOYS THEY ARE! THIS IS *REAL!*
BY THE GODS! AND LOOK AT THOSE PHOTOS!



This photo shows one of the Fugakus that made it back to Japan but crashed while attempting to land due to severe battle damage. It plowed into a line of parked Shindens and destroyed the lot ....


WE BOMBED THE UNITED STATES TWICE BEFORE THAT HAPPENED, FIRST ON NOVEMBER 10 AND THEN ON DECEMBER 2.
YOU'RE WRONG, SON. THE WAR ENDED 35 YEARS AGO IN 1946.
!?
THE WAR ENDED IN 1945 AND THE FUGAKU PROJECT WAS CANCELLED LONG BEFORE IT DID! THIS IS ABSOLUTELY IMPOSSIBLE, AND YET THESE PICTURES!
OH, BUT IF ONLY THIS WERE TRUE! IF ONLY THE FUGAKU HAD BEEN BUILT! BUT THE DATE'S WRONG! NOVEMBER 1946? IMPOSSIBLE!
B-29S BLEW AWAY THIS ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOOD BACK THEN.
I'LL NEVER FORGET THE AMERICAN FIRE BOMBINGS OF THOSE LAST TWO YEARS.
I THINK YOU'VE BEEN HITTING THE RICE WINE, SON. 35 YEARS AGO, DECEMBER 30, 1946.
THE WAR ENDED 35 YEARS AGO? THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
I LOST MY WIFE IN THAT RAID. MOST OF THE CITY'S PEOPLE WERE BURNED ALIVE.
I REMEMBER SEEING THE SHINDENS FLYING UP TO RAM THEM IN THEIR DESPERATION.
BUT I SAW YOUR WIFE JUST THE OTHER DAY!
I STILL MISS HER, EVEN AFTER ALL THIS TIME.
ONE OF THE B-29S CRASHED OVER THERE WHERE THE PACHINKO PARLOR IS NOW.

THAT'S OKAY, I'M ALL RIGHT.
PLEASED TO MEET YOU SIR. CAN I HELP YOU IN ANY WAY?
OH! HERE'S MY GRANDDAUGHTER. SHE HELPS ME WITH THE SHOP WHEN SHE CAN.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. I'VE BEEN ALONE SINCE THE WAR.
WHAT'S GOING ON?
I'LL DO THAT. THANKS.
LIKE I SAID EARLIER, IF YOU WANT OLD MANGA BETTER BUY THEM NOW.
BY THE GODS! I REMEMBER THIS FROM WHEN I WAS YOUNG!
飛行星雲
地獄の剣士
魔法屋敷
WHAT THE HELL?!?!
I REMEMBER THIS ONE SO WELL! LET'S SEE ...
IT WAS GREAT MANGA LIKE THIS THAT I DEVOURED WHEN I WAS YOUNG THAT TURNED ME INTO A MANGAKA!

THIS ISN'T QUITE THE SAME? WHAT'S GOING ON?!?

THIS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE GREAT CLASSIC MANGA THAT INSPIRED ME WHEN I WAS YOUNG. HOWEVER, NOT ONLY WAS THE ART STYLE A BIT OFF BUT THE AUTHOR'S NAME WAS DIFFERENT TOO!

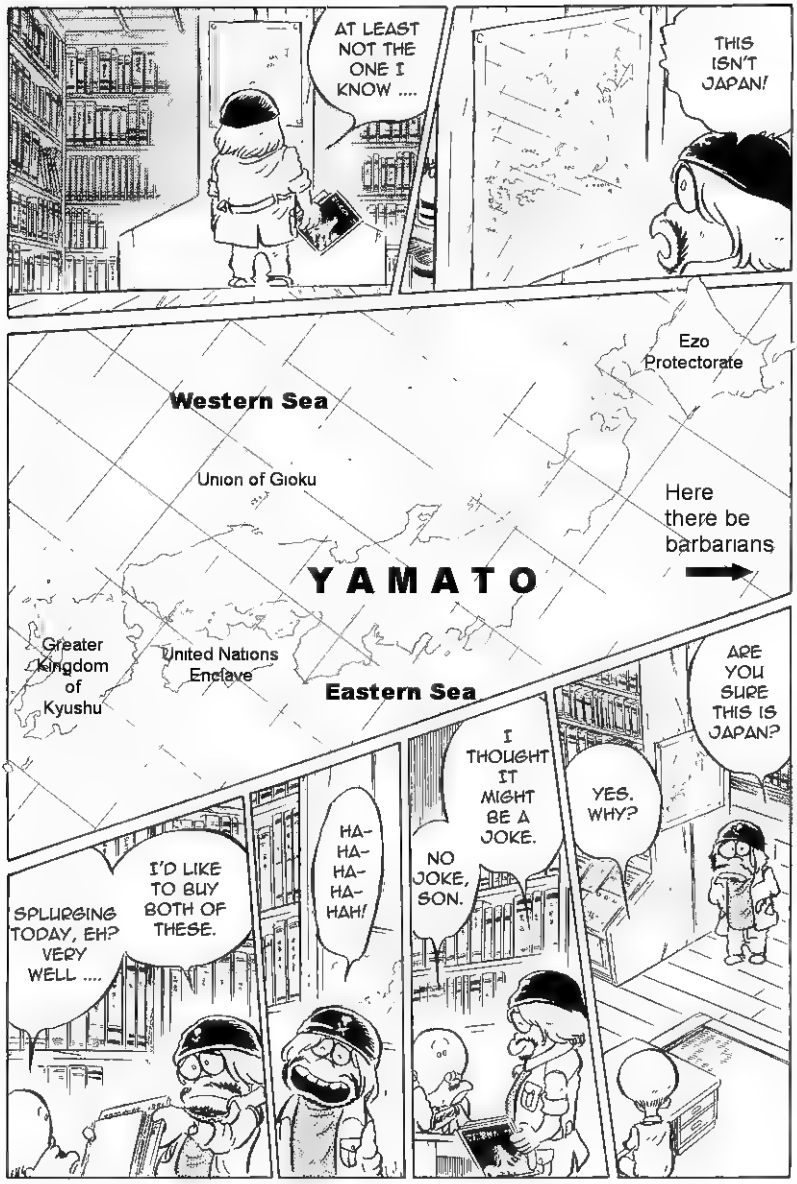
YEAH. IN AFRICA, LIKE I SAID. THERE'S A MAP OF THE WORLD OVER THERE IF YOU NEED IT.

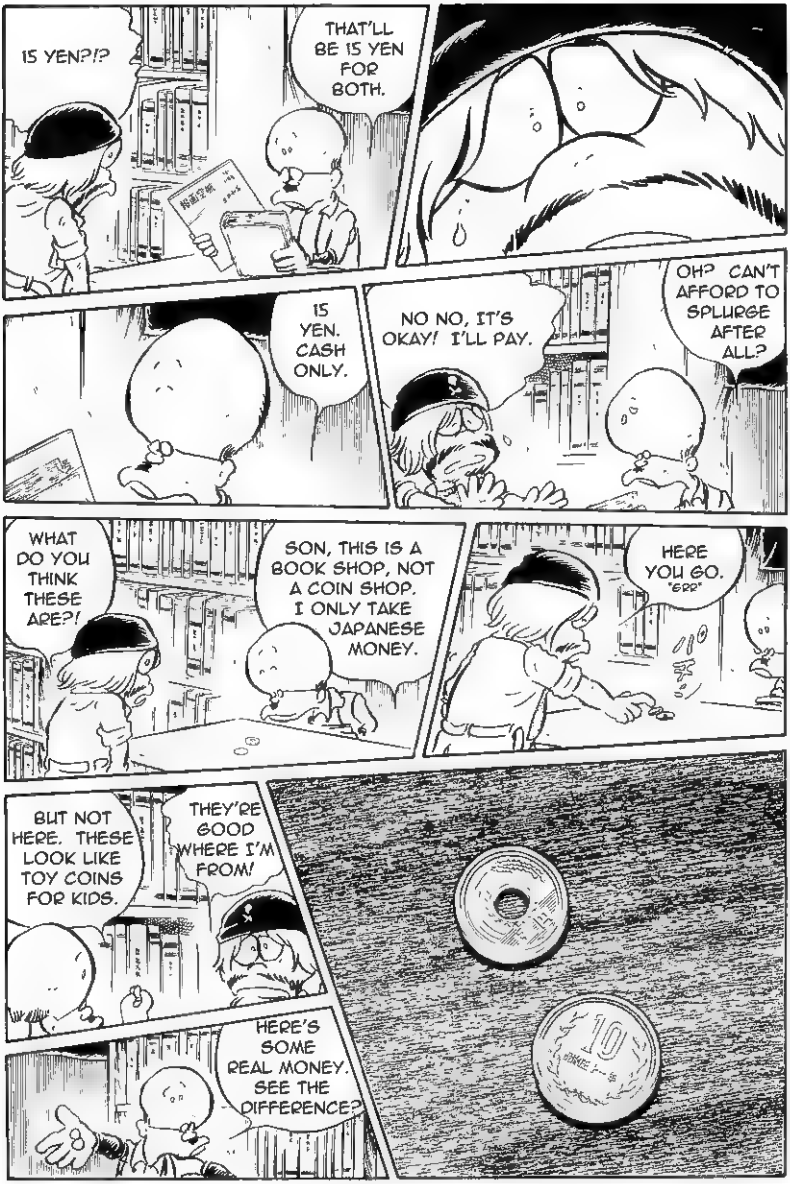
SENEGAL?

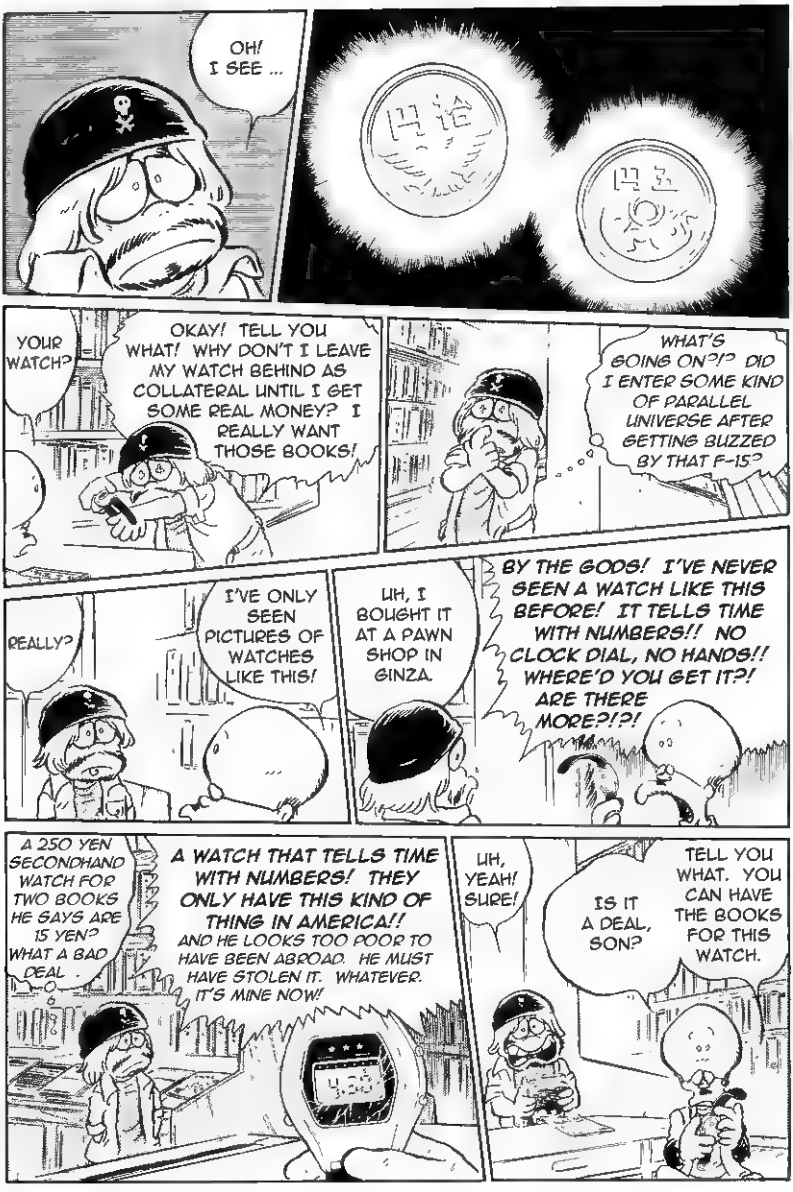
YOU'VE GOT A REAL FIND THERE, A COLLECTOR'S CLASSIC! NOT TOO MANY OF THOSE WERE PRINTED. THE AUTHOR, HE WENT MISSING WHILE ON AN EXPEDITION TO SENEGAL 3 YEARS AGO AND HASN'T BEEN HEARD FROM SINCE. THAT'S WHY IT'S RARE.

ARE YOU NEAR-SIGHTED OR SOMETHING? THE MAP OF THE WORLD IS OVER HERE, NOT THERE.

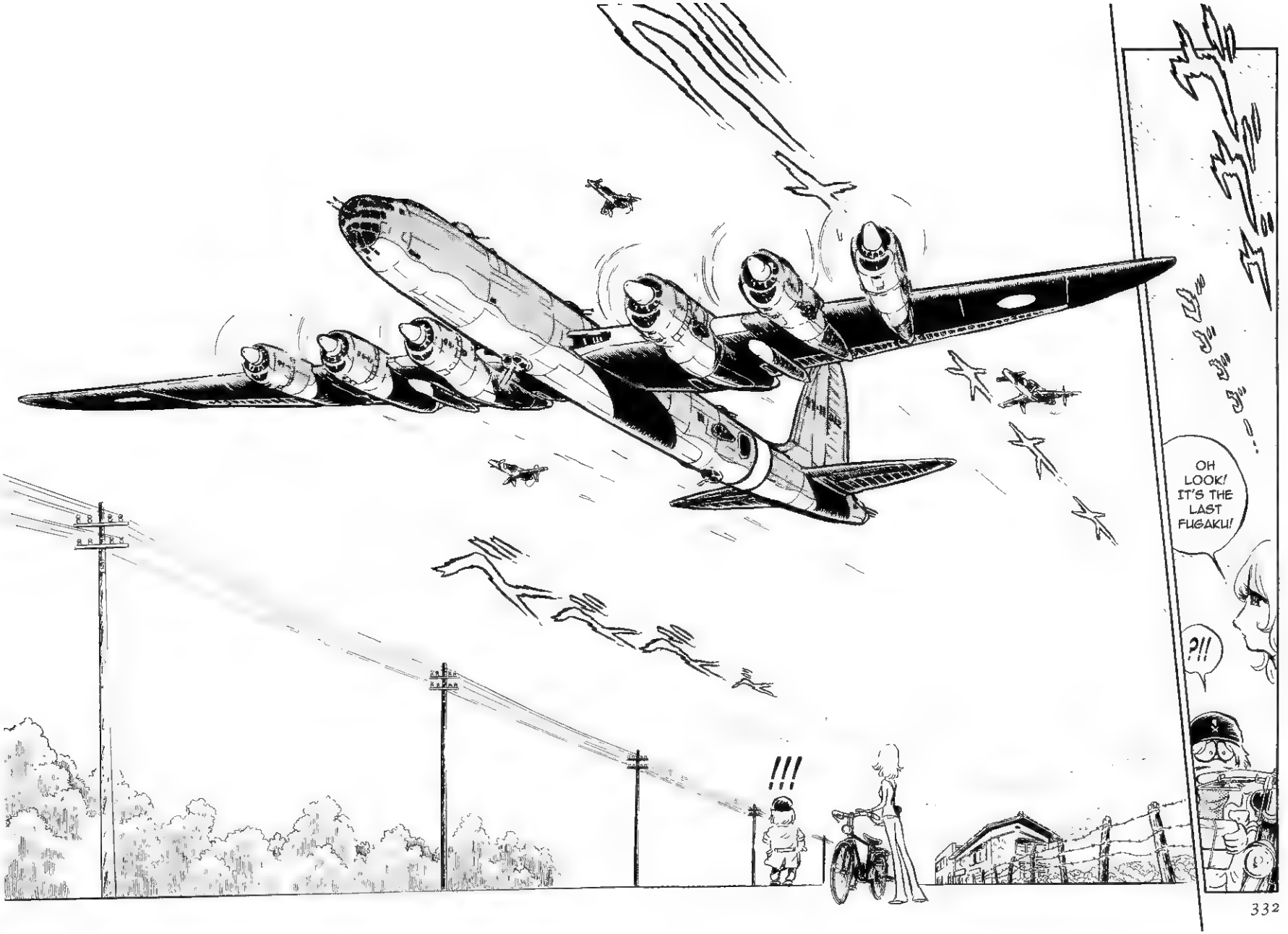
WHAT THE ... ?!?

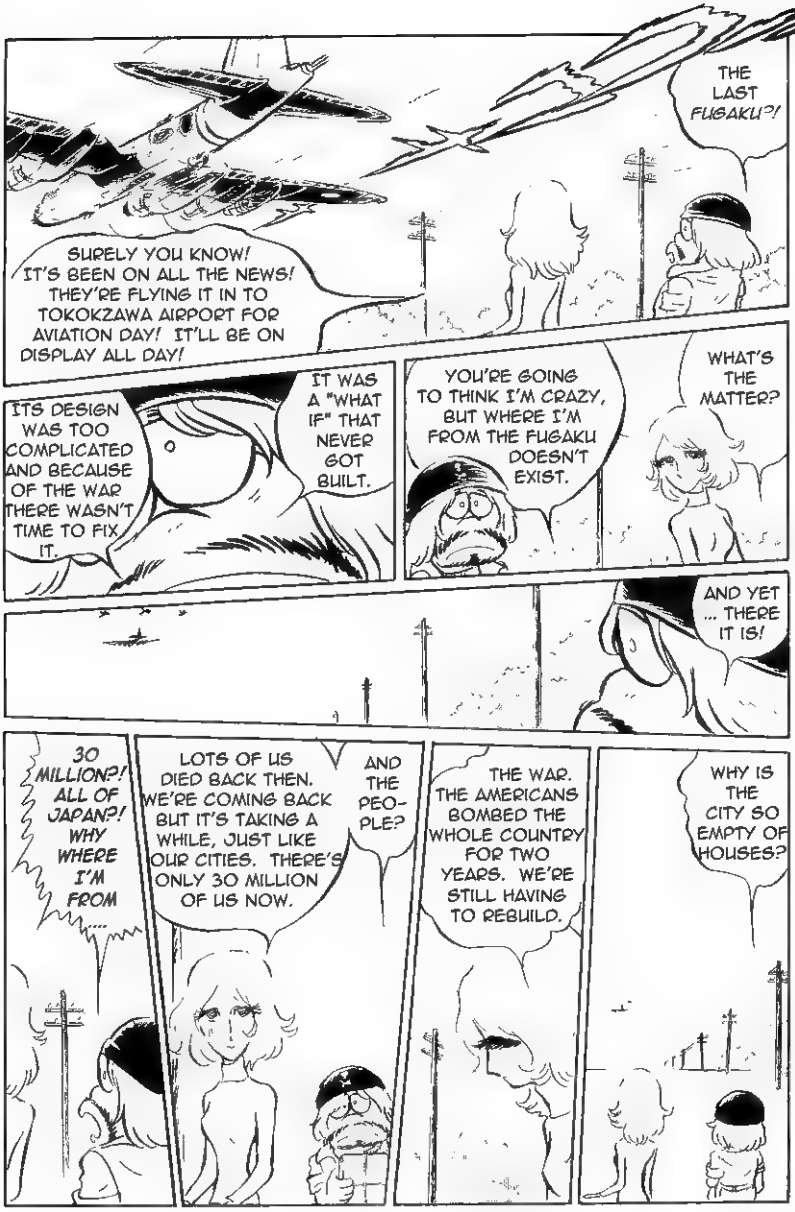

AT LEAST NOT THE ONE I KNOW ....
THIS ISN'T JAPAN!
Ezo Protectorate
Western Sea
Union of Gioku
Here there be barbarians
YAMATO
Greater Kingdom of Kyushu
United Nations Enclave
Eastern Sea
ARE YOU SURE THIS IS JAPAN?
YES. WHY?
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE A JOKE.
NO JOKE, SON.
HA-HA-HA-HA-HAH!
I'D LIKE TO BUY BOTH OF THESE.
SPLURGING TODAY, EH? VERY WELL ....

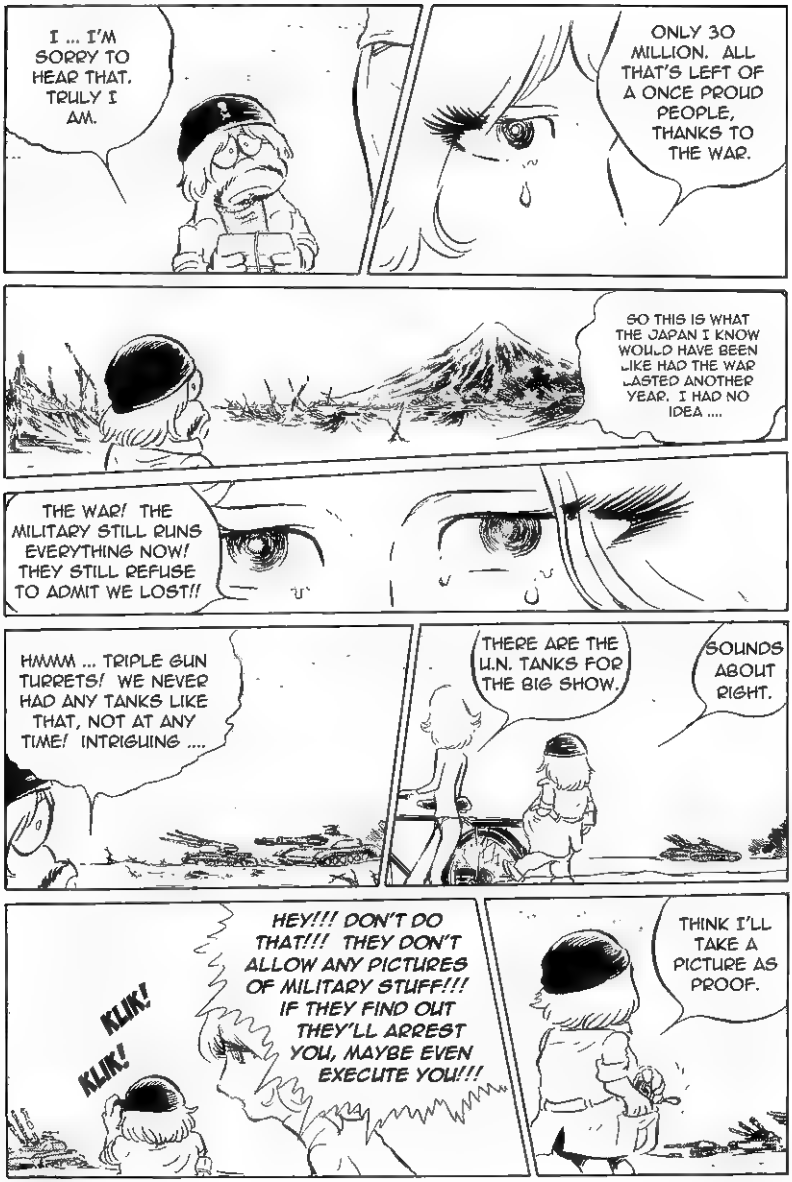

15 YEN?!?
THAT'LL BE 15 YEN FOR BOTH.
IS YEN. CASH ONLY.
NO NO, IT'S OKAY! I'LL PAY.
OH? CAN'T AFFORD TO SPLURGE AFTER ALL?
WHAT DO YOU THINK THESE ARE?!
SON, THIS IS A BOOK SHOP, NOT A COIN SHOP. I ONLY TAKE JAPANESE MONEY.
HERE YOU GO. "ERR"
BUT NOT HERE. THESE LOOK LIKE TOY COINS FOR KIDS.
THEY'RE GOOD WHERE I'M FROM!
HERE'S SOME REAL MONEY. SEE THE DIFFERENCE?
10

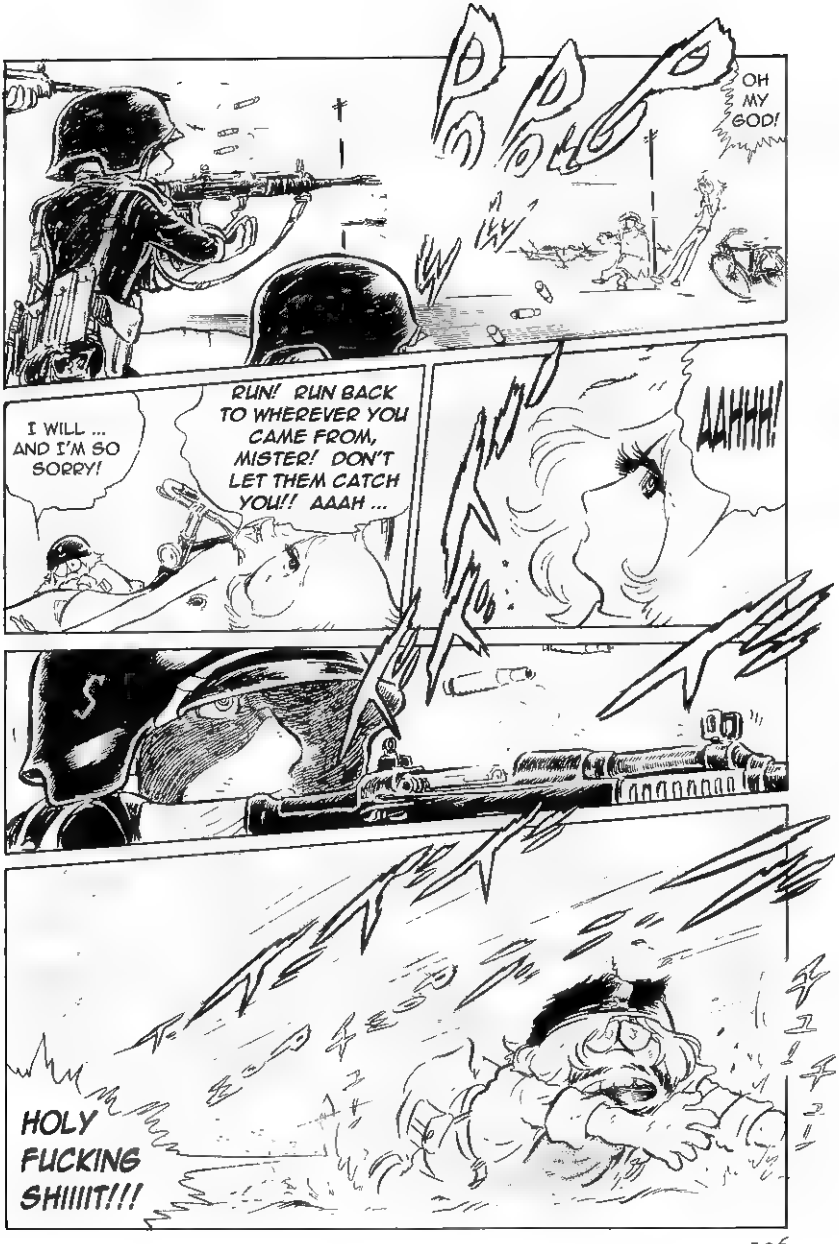

OH! I SEE ...
YOUR WATCH?
OKAY! TELL YOU WHAT! WHY DON'T I LEAVE MY WATCH BEHIND AS COLLATERAL UNTIL I GET SOME REAL MONEY? I REALLY WANT THOSE BOOKS!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!? DID I ENTER SOME KIND OF PARALLEL UNIVERSE AFTER GETTING BUZZED BY THAT F-15?
REALLY?
I'VE ONLY SEEN PICTURES OF WATCHES LIKE THIS!
UH, I BOUGHT IT AT A PAWN SHOP IN GINZA.
BY THE GODS! I'VE NEVER SEEN A WATCH LIKE THIS BEFORE! IT TELLS TIME WITH NUMBERS!! NO CLOCK DIAL, NO HANDS!! WHERE'D YOU GET IT?! ARE THERE MORE?!?!
A 250 YEN SECONDHAND WATCH FOR TWO BOOKS HE SAYS ARE 15 YEN? WHAT A BAD DEAL.
A WATCH THAT TELLS TIME WITH NUMBERS! THEY ONLY HAVE THIS KIND OF THING IN AMERICA!! AND HE LOOKS TOO POOR TO HAVE BEEN ABROAD. HE MUST HAVE STOLEN IT. WHATEVER. IT'S MINE NOW!
UH, YEAH! SURE!
IS IT A DEAL, SON?
TELL YOU WHAT. YOU CAN HAVE THE BOOKS FOR THIS WATCH.

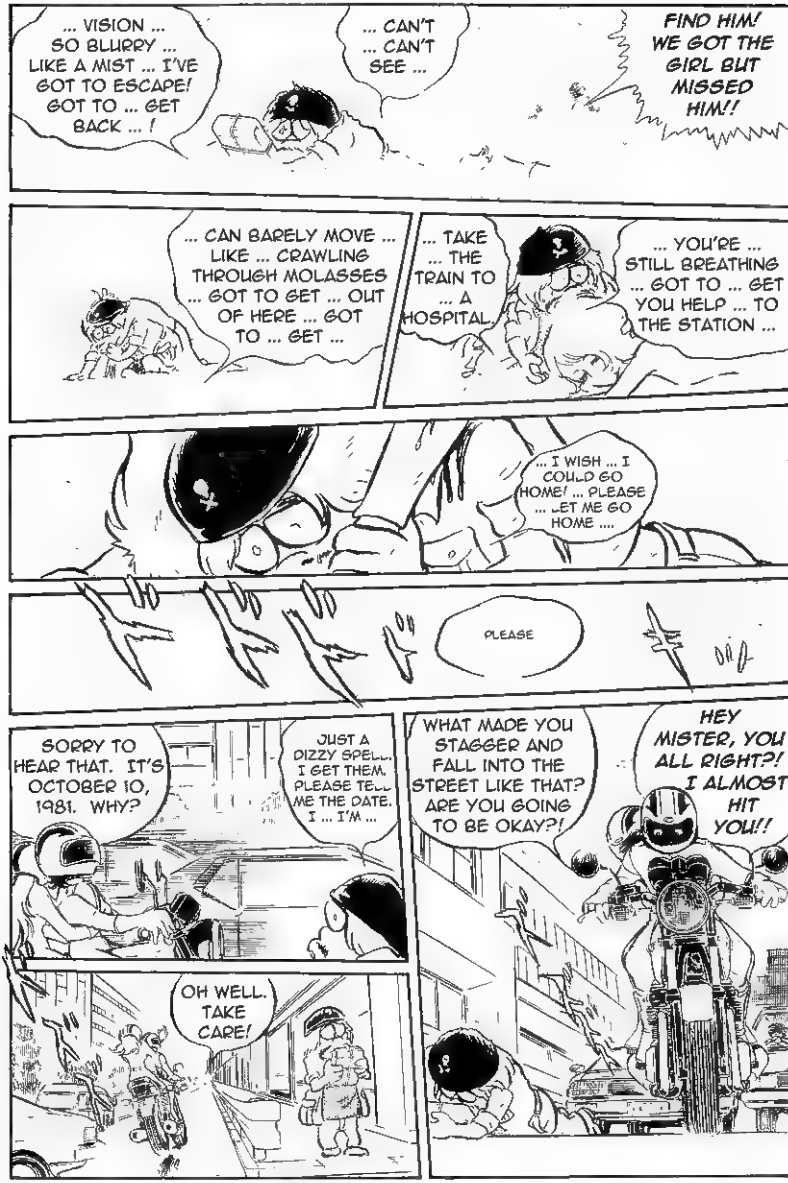
IS IT JUST ME OR IS THIS HALLWAY BRIGHTER? MAYBE BECAUSE I'M SO HAPPY TO HAVE GOTTEN THESE BOOKS!
FORGET IT! I'D RATHER HAVE THE WATCH! GOOD DAY, SON!
THE NEXT TIME I COME BACK, SIR, I'LL BRING YOU 15 YEN IN THE PROPER CURRENCY, I PROMISE.
I, AH, THANK YOU. YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO DO THAT, MISS.
IT'S WORTH FAR MORE THAN THOSE TWO BOOKS. I ALSO PAID FOR THE BOOKS MYSELF.
NOT QUITE. WHEN I FOUND OUT WHAT HAPPENED, I MADE HIM GIVE YOU YOUR WATCH BACK.
SIR, PLEASE! WAIT UP!
IT'S YOU! WHAT, DID THE OLD MAN CHANGE HIS MIND?
THEY'RE WORTH WAY MORE THAN 250 YEN TO ME ....
ACTUALLY THE REAL ONE ISN'T ABOUT FIREFLIES, BUT ...
ACTUALLY I'M GLAD TO FIND A FELLOW FAN OF KEI FURIMOTO. THAT FIREFLY MANGA YOU BOUGHT?
UH, YEAH! HIS "FIREFLY" SERIES WOULD HAVE BEEN FANTASTIC!
IT'S SUCH A WONDERFUL STORY, AND THE FACT THAT HE DIED SO YOUNG AND DIDN'T GET TO FINISH THE FULL SERIES ....
I HOPE NOT! I REALLY WANT THESE BOOKS!


OH LOOK! IT'S THE LAST FUGAKU!
?!!
!!!


THE LAST FUSAKU?!
SURELY YOU KNOW! IT'S BEEN ON ALL THE NEWS! THEY'RE FLYING IT IN TO TOKOKZAWA AIRPORT FOR AVIATION DAY! IT'LL BE ON DISPLAY ALL DAY!
WHAT'S THE MATTER?
YOU'RE GOING TO THINK I'M CRAZY, BUT WHERE I'M FROM THE FUSAKU DOESN'T EXIST.
IT WAS A "WHAT IF" THAT NEVER GOT BUILT.
ITS DESIGN WAS TOO COMPLICATED AND BECAUSE OF THE WAR THERE WASN'T TIME TO FIX IT.
AND YET ... THERE IT IS!
WHY IS THE CITY SO EMPTY OF HOUSES?
THE WAR. THE AMERICANS BOMBED THE WHOLE COUNTRY FOR TWO YEARS. WE'RE STILL HAVING TO REBUILD.
AND THE PEOPLE?
LOTS OF US DIED BACK THEN. WE'RE COMING BACK BUT IT'S TAKING A WHILE, JUST LIKE OUR CITIES. THERE'S ONLY 30 MILLION OF US NOW.
30 MILLION?! ALL OF JAPAN?! WHY WHERE I'M FROM ....


I ... I'M SORRY TO HEAR THAT. TRULY I AM.
ONLY 30 MILLION. ALL THAT'S LEFT OF A ONCE PROUD PEOPLE, THANKS TO THE WAR.
SO THIS IS WHAT THE JAPAN I KNOW WOULD HAVE BEEN LIKE HAD THE WAR LASTED ANOTHER YEAR. I HAD NO IDEA ....
THE WAR! THE MILITARY STILL RUNS EVERYTHING NOW! THEY STILL REFUSE TO ADMIT WE LOST!!
HMMM ... TRIPLE GUN TURRETS! WE NEVER HAD ANY TANKS LIKE THAT, NOT AT ANY TIME! INTRIGUING ....
THERE ARE THE U.N. TANKS FOR THE BIG SHOW.
SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT.
KLIK!
KLIK!
HEY!!! DON'T DO THAT!!! THEY DON'T ALLOW ANY PICTURES OF MILITARY STUFF!!! IF THEY FIND OUT THEY'LL ARREST YOU, MAYBE EVEN EXECUTE YOU!!!
THINK I'LL TAKE A PICTURE AS PROOF.


POP
OH MY GOD!
I WILL ... AND I'M SO SORRY!
RUN! RUN BACK TO WHEREVER YOU CAME FROM, MISTER! DON'T LET THEM CATCH YOU!! AAAH ...
AAHHH!
HOLY FUCKING SHIIIIT!!!


... VISION ... SO BLURRY ... LIKE A MIST ... I'VE GOT TO ESCAPE! GOT TO ... GET BACK ... !
... CAN'T ... CAN'T SEE ...
FIND HIM! WE GOT THE GIRL BUT MISSED HIM!!
... CAN BARELY MOVE ... LIKE ... CRAWLING THROUGH MOLASSES ... GOT TO GET ... OUT OF HERE ... GOT TO ... GET ...
... TAKE ... THE TRAIN TO ... A HOSPITAL
... YOU'RE ... STILL BREATHING ... GOT TO ... GET YOU HELP ... TO THE STATION ...
... I WISH ... I COULD GO HOME! ... PLEASE ... LET ME GO HOME ....
PLEASE
SORRY TO HEAR THAT. IT'S OCTOBER 10, 1981. WHY?
JUST A DIZZY SPELL. I GET THEM. PLEASE TELL ME THE DATE. I ... I'M ...
OH WELL. TAKE CARE!
WHAT MADE YOU STAGGER AND FALL INTO THE STREET LIKE THAT? ARE YOU GOING TO BE OKAY?!
HEY MISTER, YOU ALL RIGHT?! I ALMOST HIT YOU!!

JUST WHAT I NEED, AND I'D BETTER CALL EIJI TOO!
COFFEE
COFFEE
... AND ONCE I REALIZED WHAT WAS HAPPENING I WAS AFRAID TO GO HOME! I DIDN'T WANT TO MEET MY OTHER SELF IN THAT PLACE, YOU KNOW?
EVERYTHING WAS JUST A BIT OFF, LIKE A MISCAST PART ...
... WHERE THE WAR LASTED ANOTHER YEAR AND IT WAS A DIFFERENT WORLD.
... AND SOMEHOW AND I DON'T KNOW HOW, IT WAS LIKE I FELL THROUGH A DIMENSIONAL SHIFT INTO A DIFFERENT REALITY ...
YES! I SAW A FUGAKU! IT FLEW RIGHT OVER ME, BIG AS LIFE!! YOU AND I BOTH KNOW THAT WAS NEVER BUILT, BUT IT WAS BUILT OVER THERE!!!
A DIFFERENT REALITY IN WHICH THE WAR LASTED ANOTHER YEAR. INTERESTING .... WAS THERE ANYTHING ELSE?
BUT I REALLY DID!
YOU KNOW HOW OBSESSED YOU ARE WITH WARTIME SPECIAL PROJECTS. MAYBE YOU HIT YOUR HEAD IN THE BOOKSHOP AND HALLUCINATED IT.
THAT'S WHAT I THINK HAPPENED.
MAYBE YOU WANTED TO SEE A FUGAKU, AKIRA.
THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, THE MORE FRUSTRATED I GOT -- AND THEN I REALIZED THERE MIGHT BE ANOTHER WAY TO PROVE IT. THE HONKOYA BOOK SHOP. IT WAS A LONG SHOT BUT MY ONLY ONE LEFT.
IT REALLY HAPPENED! IT REALLY DID!!
I COULDN'T PROVE MY STORY. THE TWO BOOKS I HAD WHEN THE MOTORCYCLE ALMOST HIT ME TURNED OUT TO BE THE ONES THAT BELONG TO THIS REALITY, NOT THE ONES I BOUGHT OVER THERE.

WHAT? DO I HAVE A ... ?! ARE YOU OFF YOUR NUT OR SOMETHING?! GRANDMA AND I NEVER HAD KIDS! THERE'S NO WAY WE COULD HAVE A GRANDDAUGHTER! NOW GO AND LEAVE US ALONE!
YES, YOU BOUGHT THEM BOTH FOR 15 YEN. THEN AGAIN, YOU'RE ALWAYS BUYING STUPID STUFF LIKE THAT.

IT IS SAID THAT INFINITE POSSIBILITIES EXIST IN THE INFINITE REACHES OF SPACE AND TIME. IF WE CAN EVER ACHIEVE THE TECHNOLOGY, OR RECOVER SOME OF THE MOST CAREFULLY GUARDED SECRETS OF THE ANCIENTS, OR EVEN PERHAPS JUST GET LUCKY, THEN JUST MAYBE ONE OF US MIGHT GET THE BRIEFEST OF GLIMPSES OF LIFE THROUGH A DIMENSIONAL SHIFT.

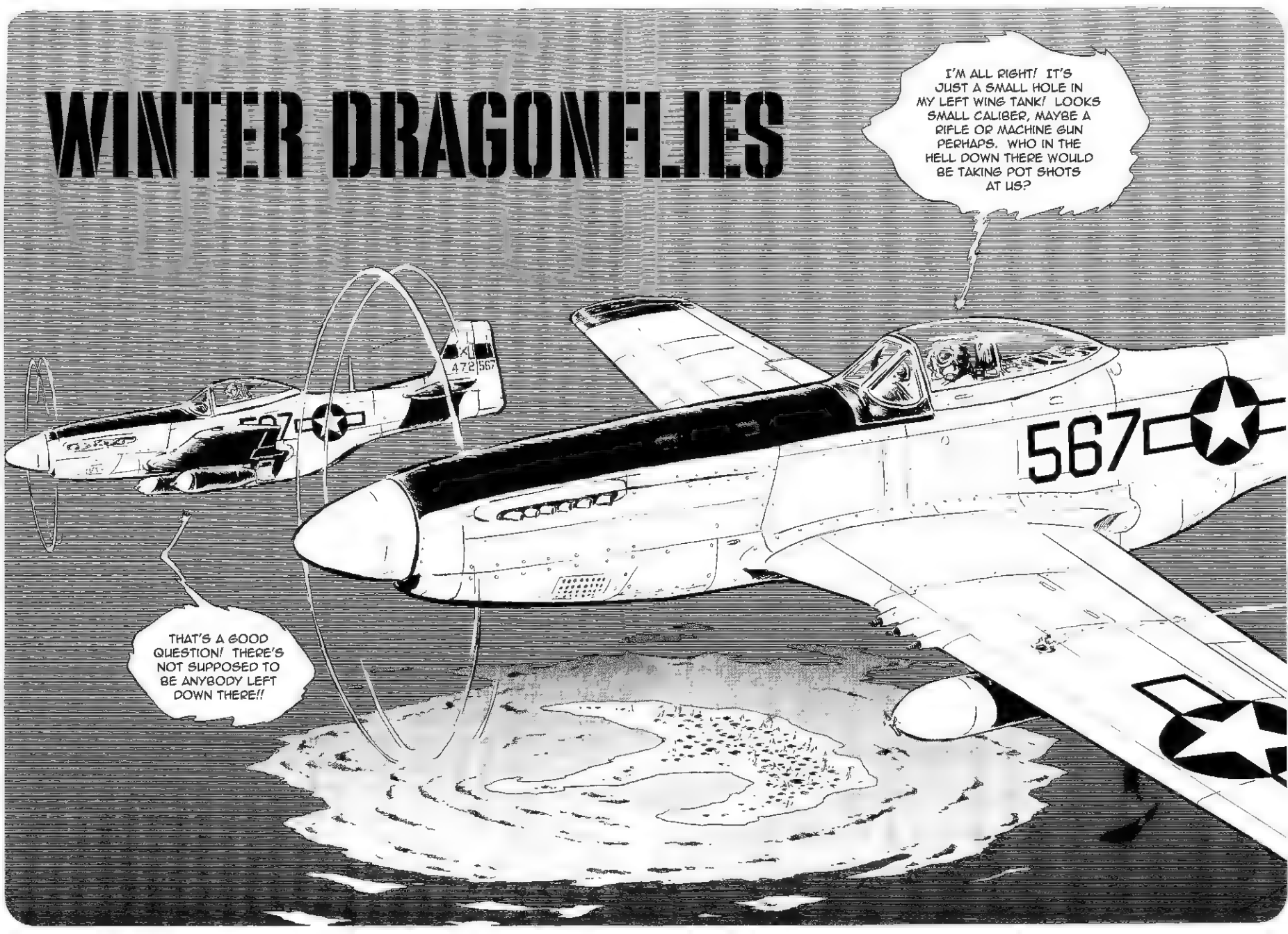
I HAD THAT EXPERIENCE, ALTHOUGH I CAN NEVER PROVE IT. I HAVE SEEN A DIFFERENT MOUNT FUJI THAN THE ONE I KNEW. I HAVE EXPERIENCED FOR A BRIEF TIME A DIFFERENT REALITY THAN THE ONE I KNOW, AND YOU KNOW WHAT? IT'S LIKE THE GUY SAID IN THE MOVIE. "I'VE BEEN PLACES .... I JUST WANT TO STAY WHERE I AM."

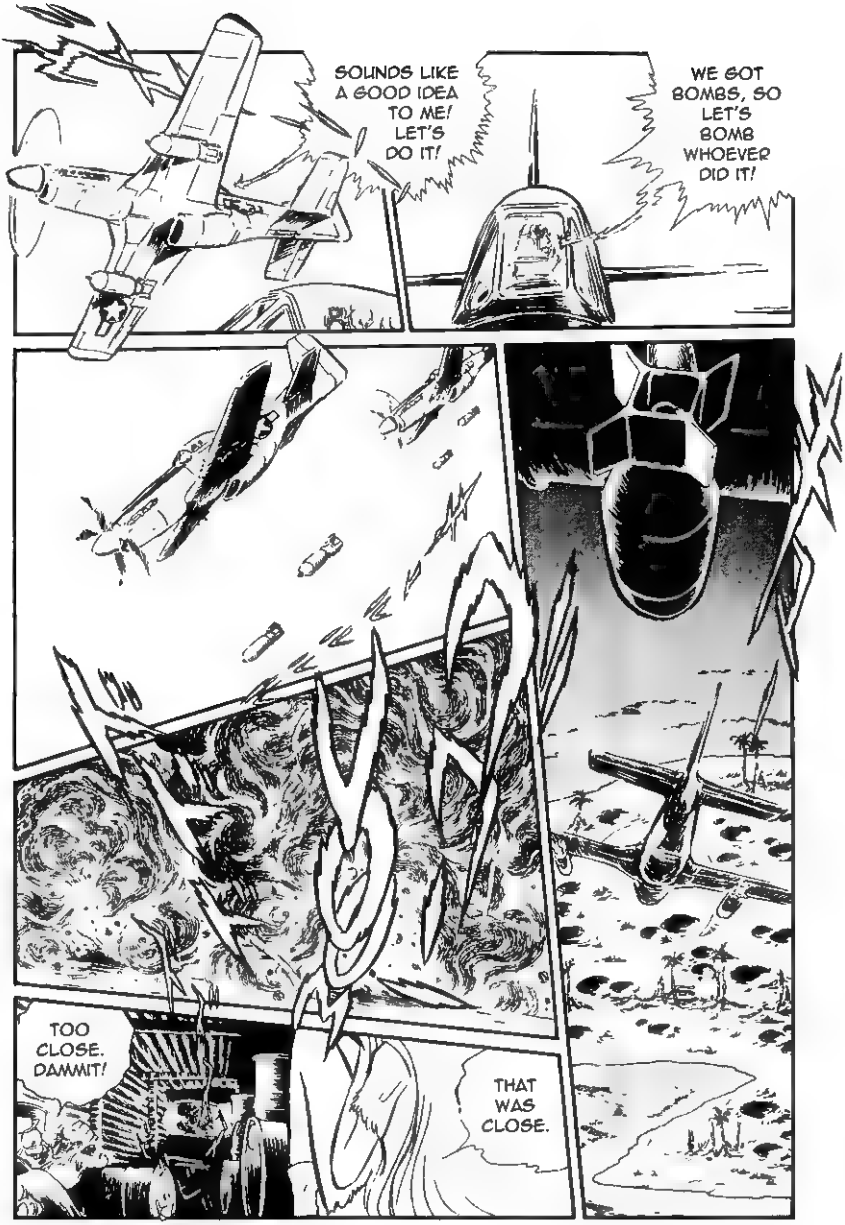
ENDE

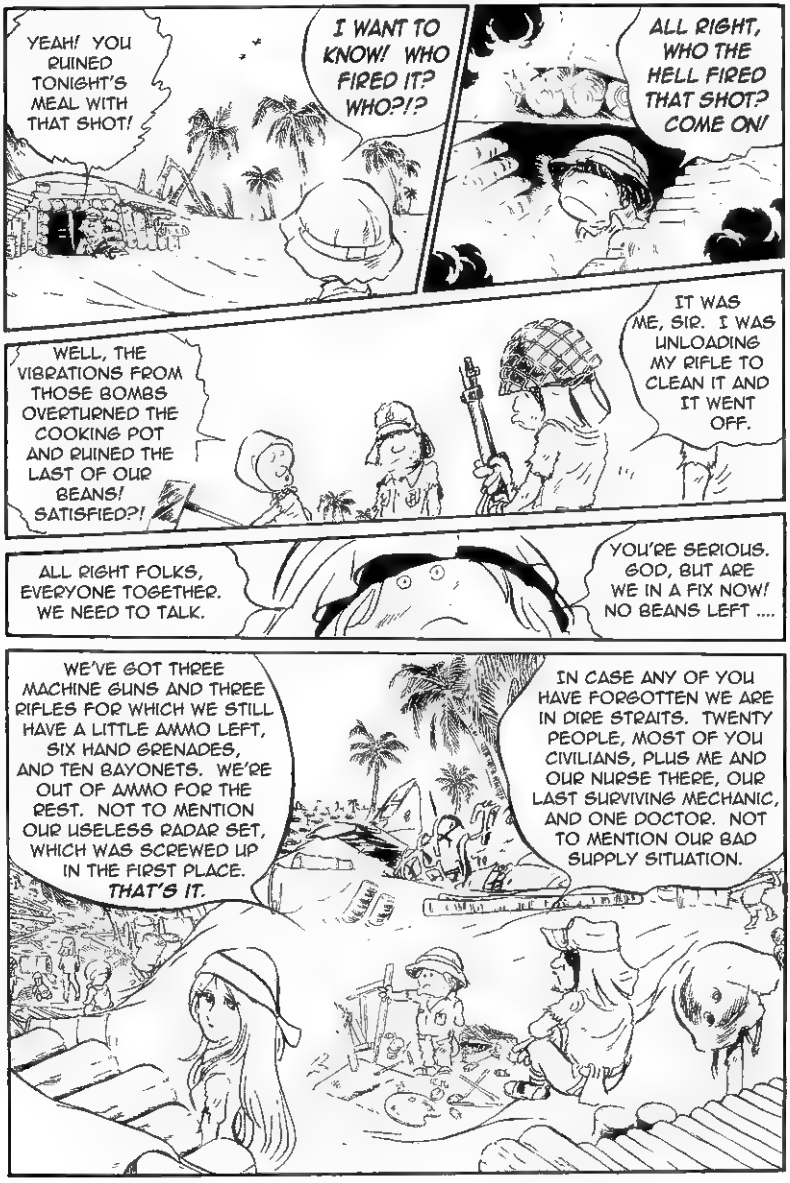
Published in Big Comic October 25, 1981 issue

THE
LEIJI
MATSUMOTO
PRESENTS
COCKPIT

HEY, WAKE UP OVER THERE! YOU'RE STARTING TO WOBBLE! YOU DON'T WANT TO CRASH, DO YOU?! HEY, I'M TALKING TO YOU!! WAKE UP!!!
HUH?!? OH, I'M SORRY, CAPTAIN FARRER! DIDN'T MEAN TO DOZE OFF! THERE'S JUST NOTHING TO DO UP HERE ANYMORE EXCEPT FLY OUR PATROL, YOU KNOW?
SOMEBODY BELOW JUST HIT ME!
WHAT THE FUCK?!?


WINTER DRAGONFLIES
I'M ALL RIGHT! IT'S JUST A SMALL HOLE IN MY LEFT WING TANK! LOOKS SMALL CALIBER, MAYBE A RIFLE OR MACHINE GUN PERHAPS. WHO IN THE HELL DOWN THERE WOULD BE TAKING POT SHOTS AT US?
THAT'S A GOOD QUESTION! THERE'S NOT SUPPOSED TO BE ANYBODY LEFT DOWN THERE!!
567


SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA TO ME! LET'S DO IT!
WE GOT BOMBS, SO LET'S BOMB WHOEVER DID IT!
TOO CLOSE. DAMMIT!
THAT WAS CLOSE.


YEAH! YOU RUINED TONIGHT'S MEAL WITH THAT SHOT!
I WANT TO KNOW! WHO FIRED IT? WHO?!?
ALL RIGHT, WHO THE HELL FIRED THAT SHOT? COME ON!
WELL, THE VIBRATIONS FROM THOSE BOMBS OVERTURNED THE COOKING POT AND RUINED THE LAST OF OUR BEANS! SATISFIED?!
IT WAS ME, SIR. I WAS UNLOADING MY RIFLE TO CLEAN IT AND IT WENT OFF.
ALL RIGHT FOLKS, EVERYONE TOGETHER. WE NEED TO TALK.
YOU'RE SERIOUS. GOD, BUT ARE WE IN A FIX NOW! NO BEANS LEFT ....
WE'VE GOT THREE MACHINE GUNS AND THREE RIFLES FOR WHICH WE STILL HAVE A LITTLE AMMO LEFT, SIX HAND GRENADES, AND TEN BAYONETS. WE'RE OUT OF AMMO FOR THE REST. NOT TO MENTION OUR USELESS RADAR SET, WHICH WAS SCREWED UP IN THE FIRST PLACE. THAT'S IT.
IN CASE ANY OF YOU HAVE FORGOTTEN WE ARE IN DIRE STRAITS. TWENTY PEOPLE, MOST OF YOU CIVILIANS, PLUS ME AND OUR NURSE THERE, OUR LAST SURVIVING MECHANIC, AND ONE DOCTOR. NOT TO MENTION OUR BAD SUPPLY SITUATION.

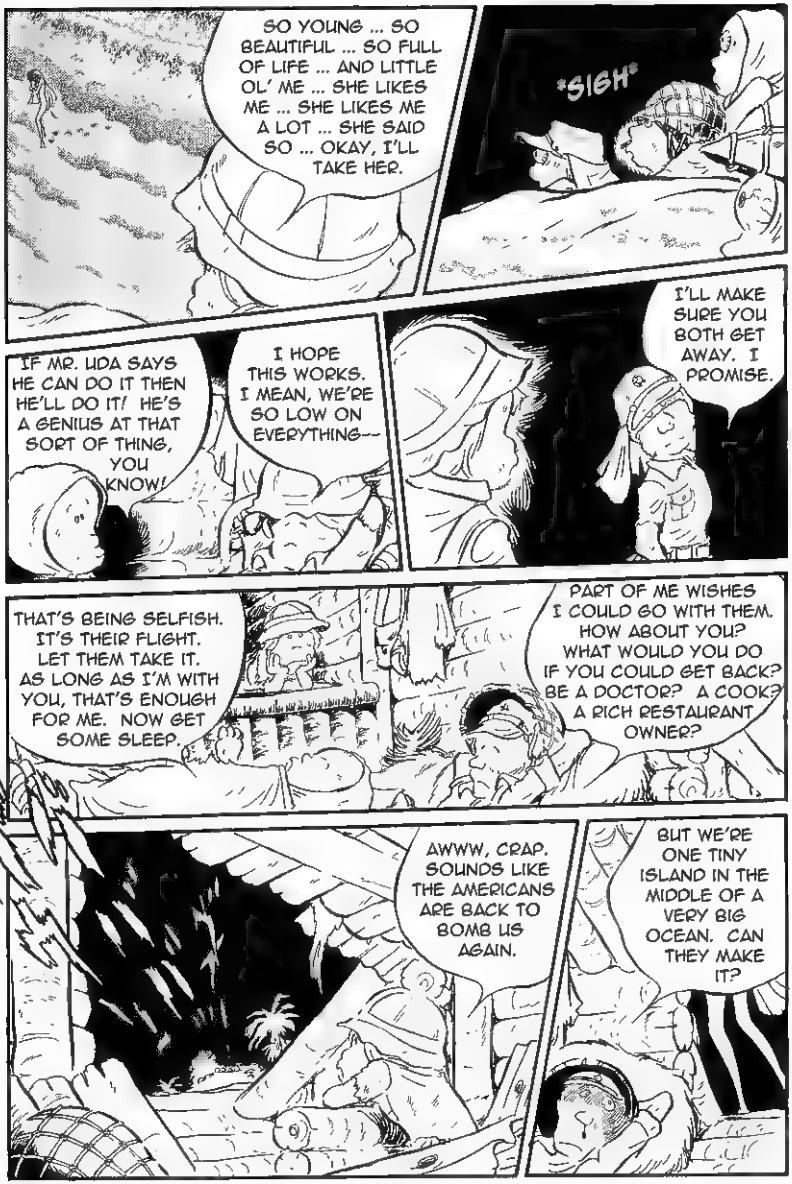
YEAH. "STORM ISLAND." APT NAME, GIVEN THE WEATHER AND ALL THE BOMBING.
SHIKETA ISLAND. I NEVER THOUGHT I'D DIE HERE.
WE'RE ALMOST OUT OF FOOD.
OH, AND ALL OF THESE WRECKED PLANES. WE CAN'T AFFORD ANY MORE SCREWUPS!
DO I MAKE MYSELF CLEAR?!
HUH. ANOTHER SQUALL.
FRESH WATER ...
THAT'S THE ONE THING WE'VE GOT PLENTY OF, BOTH FOR DRINKING AND BATHING. I JUST WISH IT MADE UP FOR THE LACK OF THE REST.
THERE SHE GOES TO BATHE. SUCH A CLEAN FREAK.

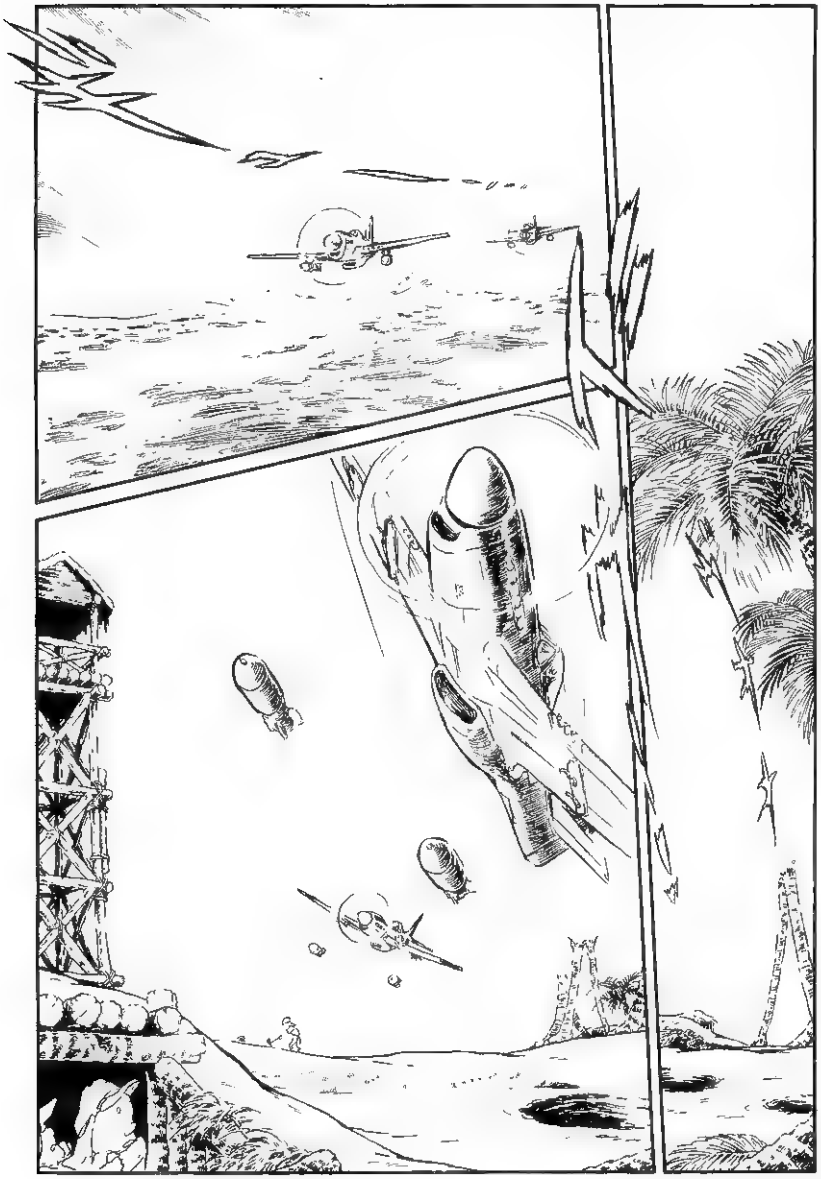
ALMOST TWO DOZEN PEOPLE STILL STUCK ON THIS GOD FORSAKEN ISLAND ...
... NO WAY TO GET THEM OFF, AND WITH SUPPLIES RUNNING DANGEROUSLY LOW ....
THERE MUST BE A WAY TO SAVE EVERYONE!
I SEE YOU'VE GOT YOUR ART SUPPLIES. WANT TO PAINT ME IN THE NUDE?
I WOULDN'T MIND POSING FOR YOU, MR. ASHIYAMA. IN FACT, I WISH YOU'D DO IT NOW WHILE I STILL LOOK GOOD. KNOW WHAT I MEAN?
UHH, NOT TODAY! THANKS!

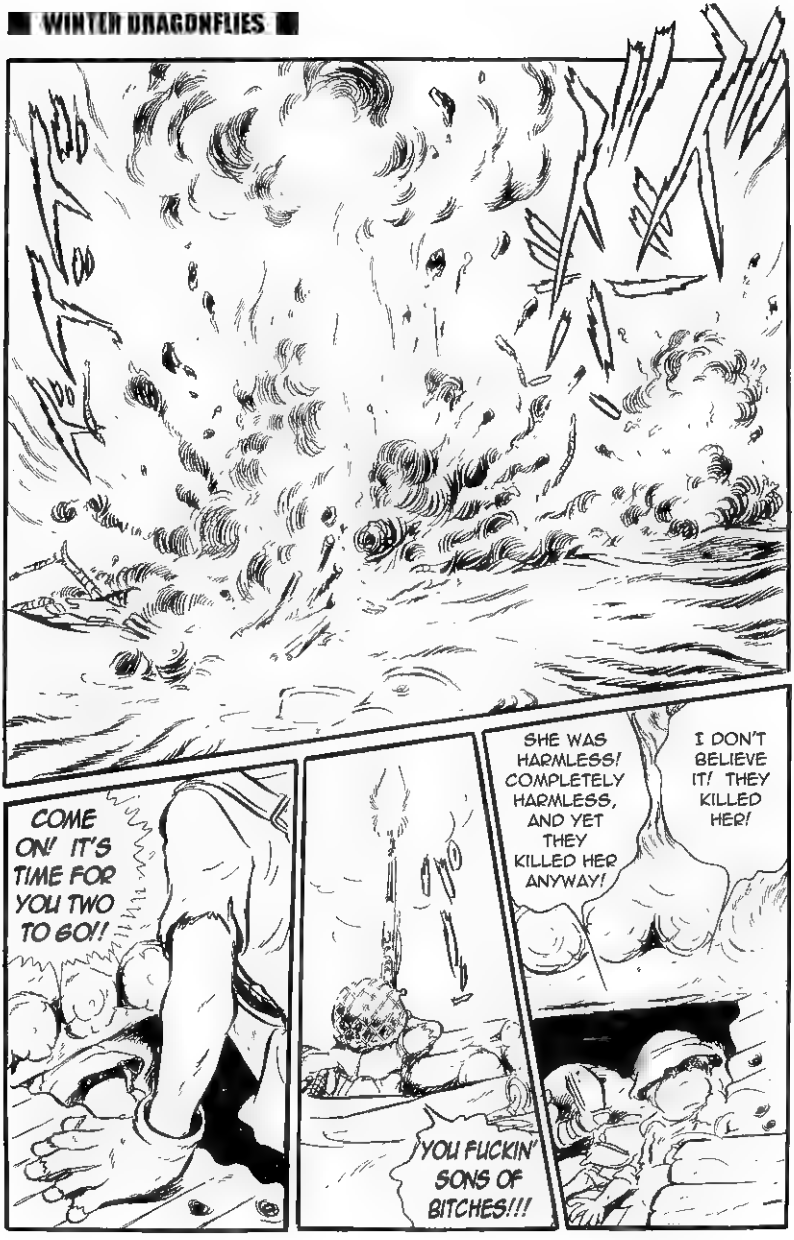
HE'S JUST BASHFUL, THAT'S ALL. HE DOESN'T WANT TO PAINT THE BEST LANDSCAPE OF ALL.
LITTLE LIAR, HEH-HEH.
I DO LANDSCAPES, NOT NUDES! SEE YOU LATER!!
BUT WHY NOT? I'M WILLING!
INSTEAD I DECIDED TO DO MY DUTY FOR THE WAR AND ENDED UP STUCK HERE AS A VOLUNTEER NURSE. I COULD DEAL WITH AT FIRST, BUT EVENTUALLY THE AMERICANS CAME AND BOMBARDED US, AND TURNED SHIKETA ISLAND INTO AN HONEST TO GOD HELL.
AND TO THINK I COULD HAVE BEEN A FAMOUS ACTRESS!
HOW'S THE REST OF THE PLANE COMING?
NOT SO GOOD
SOUNDS LIKE YOU GOT HER RUNNING, MR. UDA! THAT'S GREAT! I KNEW YOU WERE A GOOD MECHANIC!
I SEE. WELL, WE'LL COME UP WITH SOME-THING
PLUS THE RUNWAY'S BOMBED TO HELL AND WE DON'T HAVE THE STUFF TO LEVEL IT BACK OUT AGAIN.
I'VE JUST ABOUT GOT THE FUSELAGE DONE BUT THERE AREN'T ANY GOOD TIRES LEFT FOR THE LANDING GEAR.

NAH, I DON'T THINK SO. I HAVE FAITH IN OUR HUMANITY.
A FINE MESS OF CANNIBALS WE'LL MAKE BEFORE LONG.
YOU KNOW WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN SOON, DON'T YOU? EVERYONE WILL GO CRAZY FROM HUNGER. WE'LL START TO KILL EACH OTHER FOR FOOD.
AT LEAST WE'VE HAD THE BENEFIT OF HAVING WOMEN WITH US IN THIS FIX. THAT'S HELPED TAKE THE EDGE OFF SOMEWHAT. SHE LIKES YOU, YOU KNOW.
SO HERE YOU ARE. WHAT ARE YOU THINKING?
DON'T ASK.
NAH. I'M TOO SMALL AND WEAK TO EVER WIN THAT KIND OF FIGHT.
WILL IT GO THAT FAR? WILL IT BOIL DOWN TO HER AND ME, OR SOME OTHER MAN HERE, STARTING OUR OWN PRIMITIVE TRIBE IN THIS PLACE?
ENJOY HER NOW ...
... BEFORE BONES ARE ALL THAT'S LEFT OF HER.

BACK WHEN I WAS STUDYING ART IN PARIS, THERE WAS THIS RICH FRENCHMAN WHO LIKED MY STUFF. HE HIRED ME TO PILOT HIS PRIVATE PLANE FOR HIM. THAT'S HOW I GOT THROUGH ART SCHOOL.
TO BE HONEST, I HAVEN'T FLOWN SINCE BEFORE THE WAR.
YOU KNOW, YOU AND I ARE THE ONLY TWO WHO CAN FLY THAT PLANE.
BUT WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME IF SOMETHING GOES WRONG WITH THAT PLANE? YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN FIX IT, MR. UDA!
GOOD. NOW LISTEN. I'M NOT GOING WITH YOU. WHEN YOU GO, TAKE ONE OF THE WOMEN WITH YOU. IN FACT, TAKE THE NURSE.
I ... I'LL THINK ABOUT IT.
YOU'RE SAYING IT'S NOT OUR DESTINY TO DIE HERE, BUT TO GO ON, AND BE WHAT BOTH US CAN BE ONCE THE WAR IS OVER.
I SEE WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO SAY. WE'RE BOTH ALIKE IN MANY WAYS. WE'RE YOUNG, WE HAVE DREAMS BEYOND THE WAR ....
NOT IN FLIGHT I CAN'T, AND YOU TWO OF ALL OF US DESERVE TO LIVE.


SO YOUNG ... SO BEAUTIFUL ... SO FULL OF LIFE ... AND LITTLE OL' ME ... SHE LIKES ME ... SHE LIKES ME A LOT ... SHE SAID SO ... OKAY, I'LL TAKE HER.
SIGH
I'LL MAKE SURE YOU BOTH GET AWAY. I PROMISE.
I HOPE THIS WORKS. I MEAN, WE'RE SO LOW ON EVERYTHING--
IF MR. UDA SAYS HE CAN DO IT THEN HE'LL DO IT! HE'S A GENIUS AT THAT SORT OF THING, YOU KNOW!
PART OF ME WISHES I COULD GO WITH THEM. HOW ABOUT YOU? WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU COULD GET BACK? BE A DOCTOR? A COOK? A RICH RESTAURANT OWNER?
THAT'S BEING SELFISH. IT'S THEIR FLIGHT. LET THEM TAKE IT. AS LONG AS I'M WITH YOU, THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME. NOW GET SOME SLEEP.
BUT WE'RE ONE TINY ISLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF A VERY BIG OCEAN. CAN THEY MAKE IT?
AWWW, CRAP. SOUNDS LIKE THE AMERICANS ARE BACK TO BOMB US AGAIN.



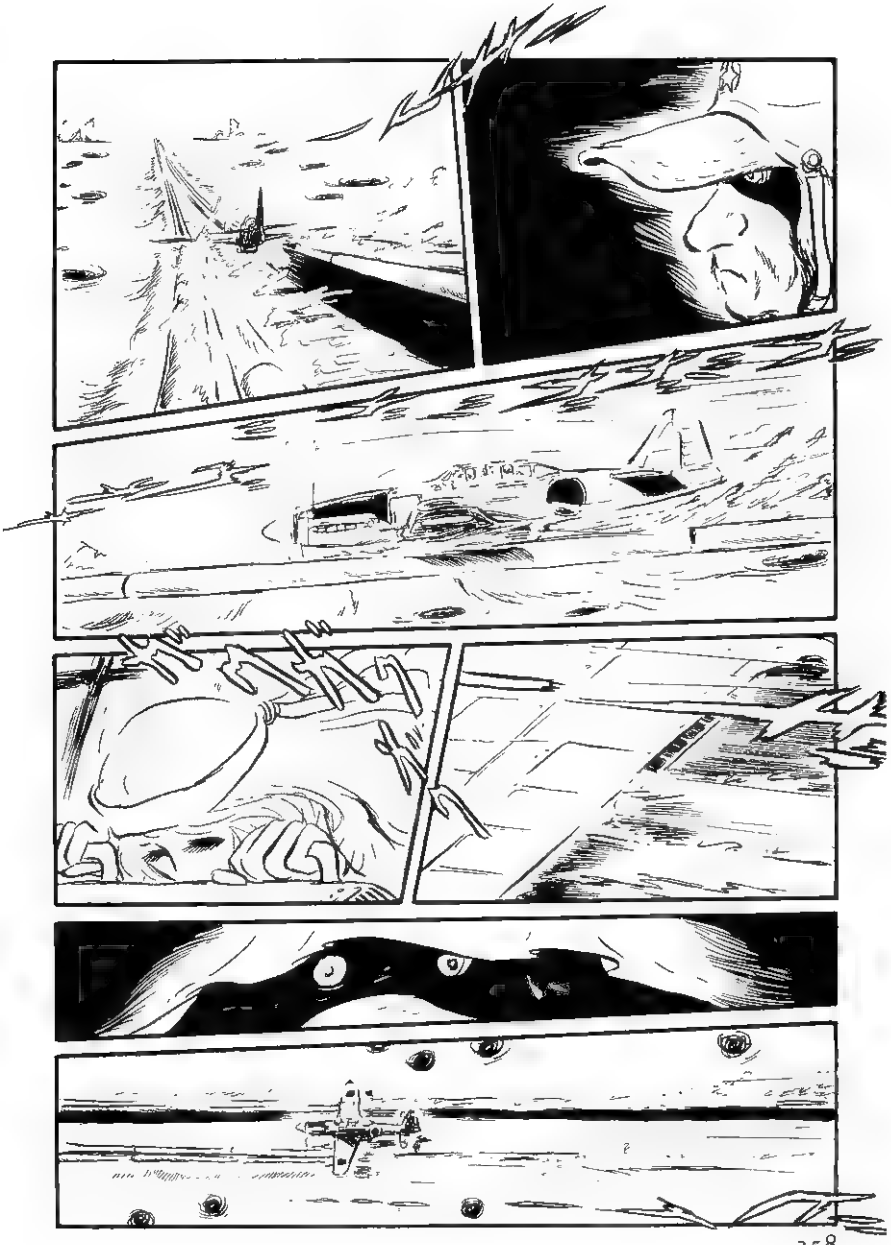

I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THEY KILLED HER!
SHE WAS HARMLESS! COMPLETELY HARMLESS, AND YET THEY KILLED HER ANYWAY!
YOU FUCKIN' SONS OF BITCHES!!!
COME ON! IT'S TIME FOR YOU TWO TO GO!!

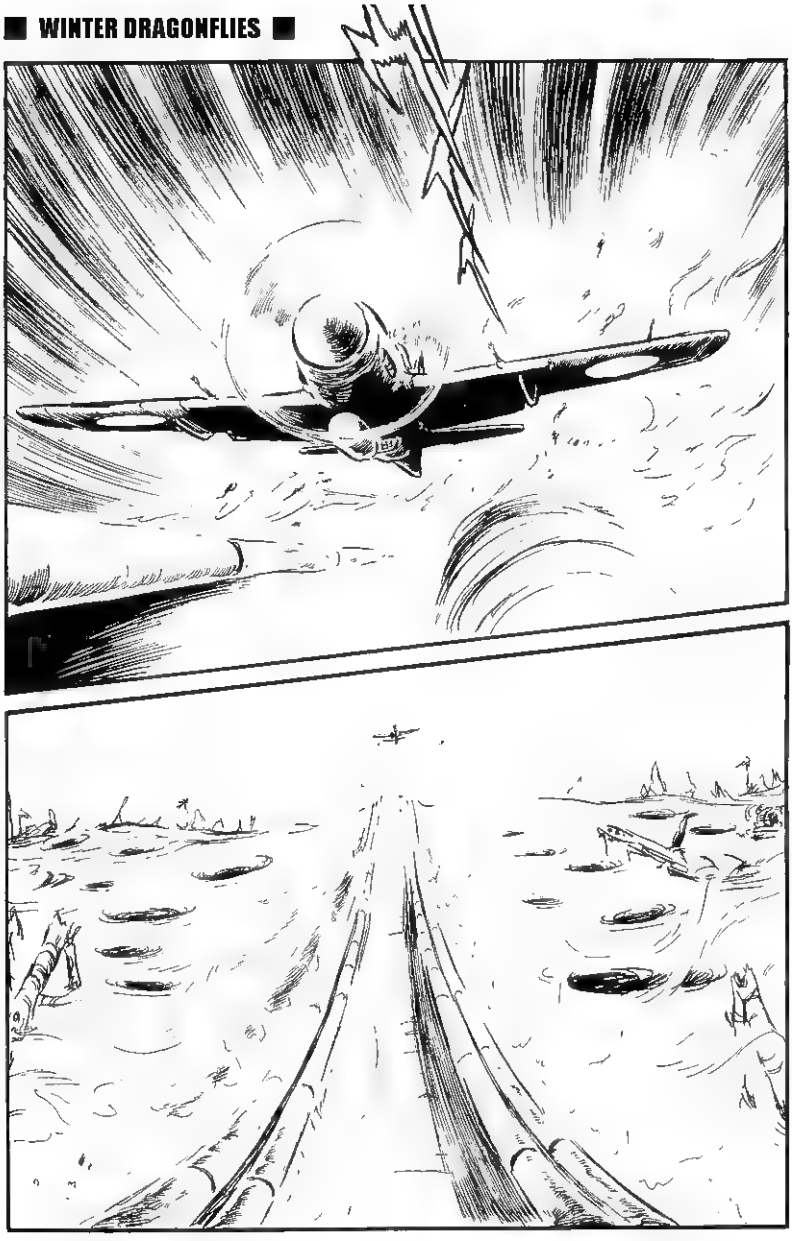
IT'S PIECED TOGETHER FROM MULTIPLE ARMY AND NAVY TYPES!
AND SINCE I COULDN'T SOLVE THE PROBLEM OF GOOD TIRES FOR LANDING GEAR, YOU'LL HAVE TO USE THIS SLIDE I'VE RIGGED UP TO TAKE OFF!
YOU'LL ONLY GET ONE CHANCE, SO DO IT RIGHT!

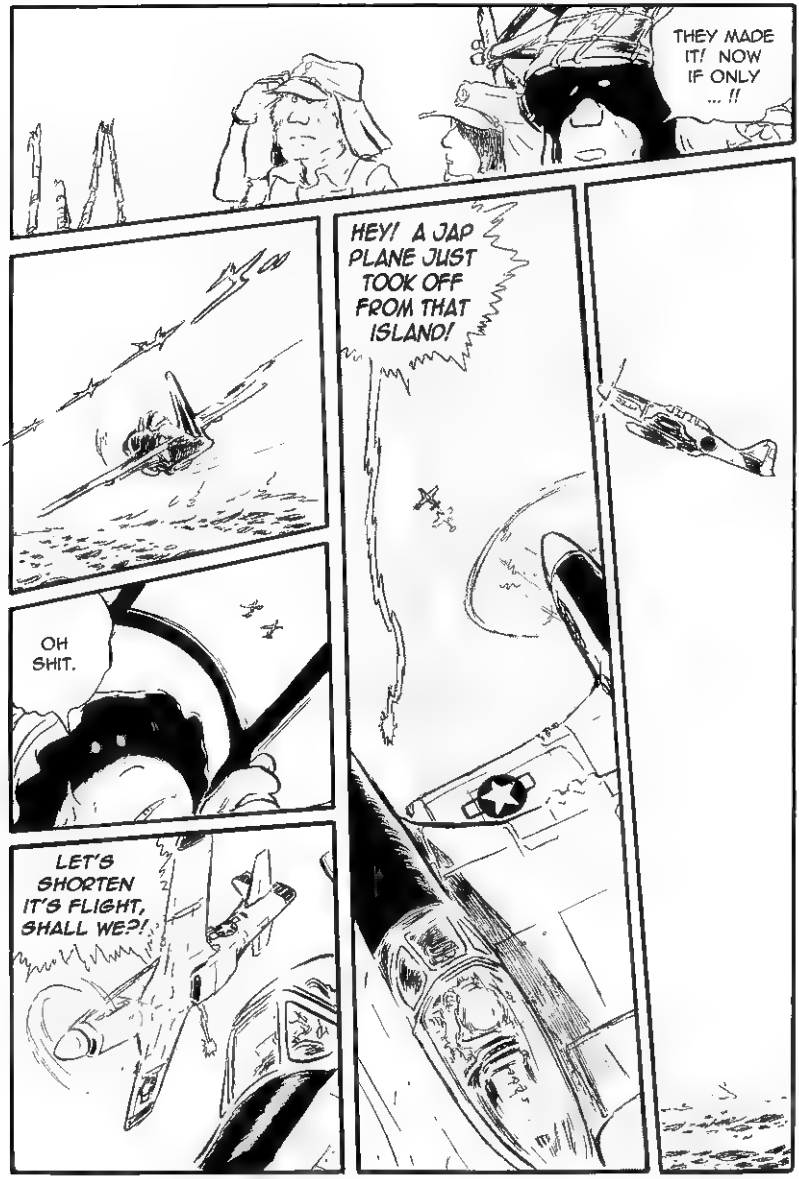
ONCE THE BOTH OF YOU GET THERE, PLEASE DON'T FORGET ABOUT US. WE'D LIKE TO GET OFF THIS ISLAND TOO, OKAY? OH, AND YOU'VE GOT THE LAST OF OUR MACHINE GUN AMMO, JUST IN CASE!
YOU'LL HAVE TO DITCH ONCE YOU FIND A FRIENDLY PLACE TO TAKE YOU IN.
BUT THERE ARE PEOPLE MORE IMPORTANT THAN ME THAT SHOULD GO!
WE TOOK A VOTE AND WE AGREED ON YOU! NOW COME ON!

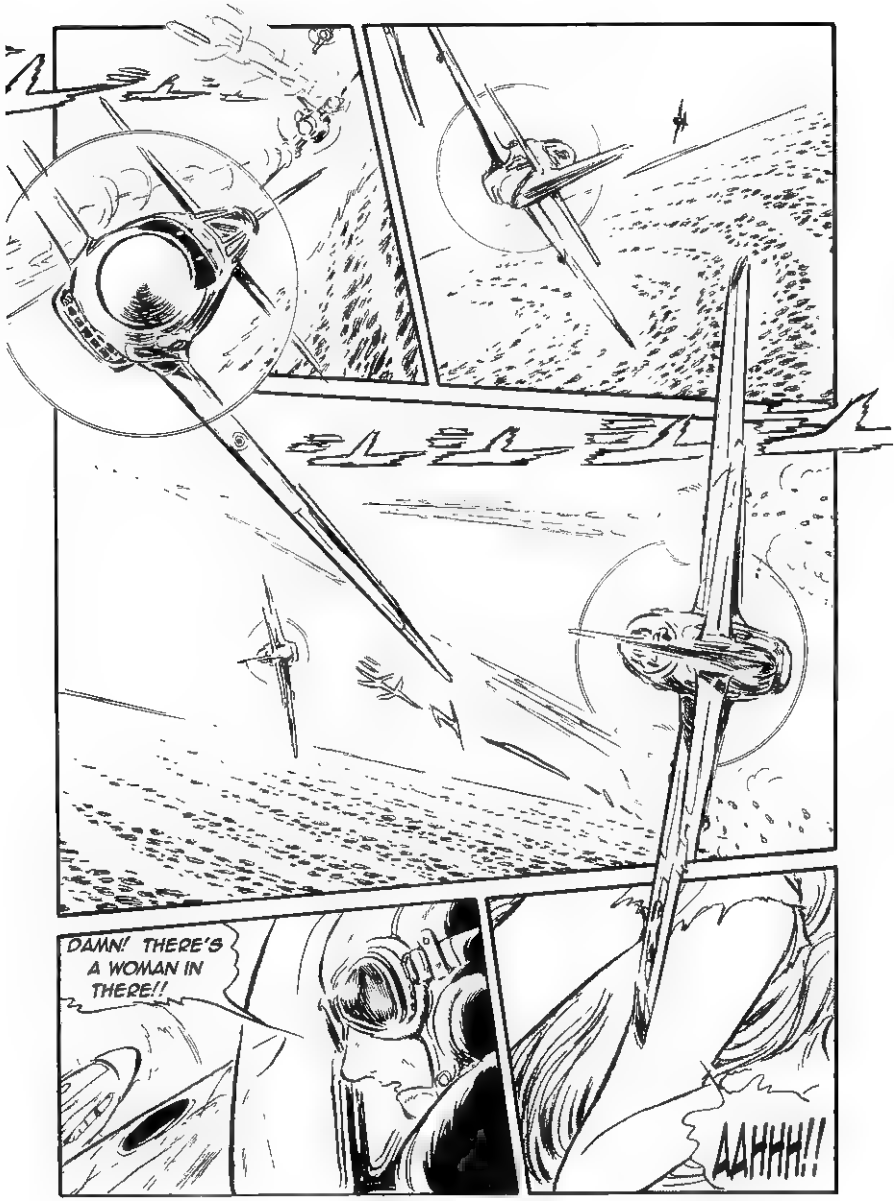
MR UDA! YOU OF ALL PEOPLE SHOULD BE GOING ON THAT PLANE! I MEAN, YOU BUILT IT! YOU--
HE GAVE UP HIS SEAT FOR YOU, MA'AM. PLEASE.
IT'S WHAT A MAN DOES TO BE A MAN, MISS. NOW TAKE MY SEAT AND GO!
GET ON THE DAMN PLANE!!!
DO I HAVE TO FORCE YOU AT GUNPOINT, MISS?!
WE'RE OUT OF TIME! DON'T FORGET, ONE SHOT!! SAFE JOURNEY YOU TWO!!!
IF YOU'RE GOING TO GO, GO NOW!!!
FIGHTERS INCOMING! THEY'RE BACK!

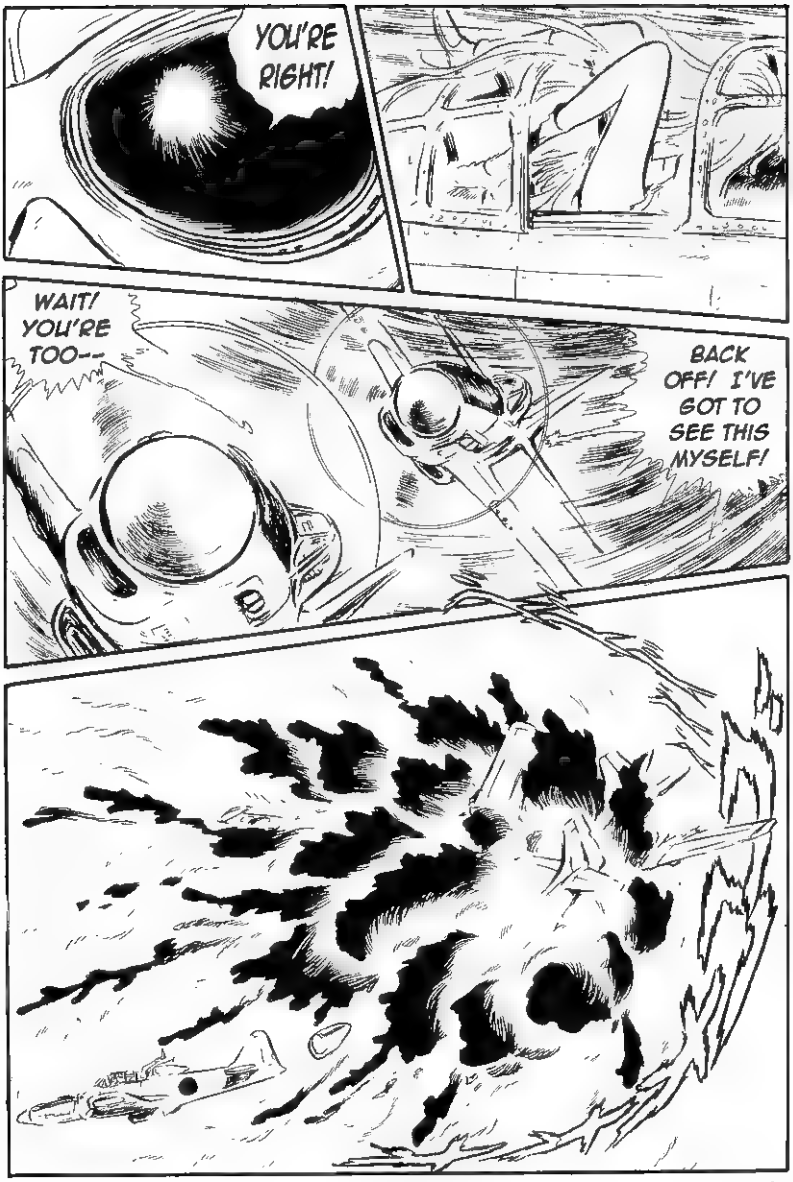
SLAM!
AND DON'T TRY TO FIGHT UNLESS YOU DON'T HAVE ANY CHOICE!!
I CAN'T GUARANTEE HOW SHE'LL PERFORM IN FLIGHT, SO JUST TRY TO FLY STRAIGHT WHENEVER YOU CAN!
HEAVEN HELP US!
CUT US LOOSE! WE'RE TAKING OFF!!
WHUM-BUM-BL-BUM-WHUM
RRRRRRRRRRRRRRRR






THEY MADE IT! NOW IF ONLY ... !!
HEY! A JAP PLANE JUST TOOK OFF FROM THAT ISLAND!
OH SHIT.
LET'S SHORTEN IT'S FLIGHT, SHALL WE?!


DAMN! THERE'S A WOMAN IN THERE!!
AAHHH!!


YOU'RE RIGHT!
WAIT! YOU'RE TOO--
BACK OFF! I'VE GOT TO SEE THIS MYSELF!

YEAH. WHO'D OF THOUGHT IT? TWO BIRDS IN ONE HAND, AND ALL THANKS TO A WOMAN'S ... OH, NEVER MIND.
I'M GLAD THEY GOT RID OF THEM BEFORE THEY LEFT. AT LEAST WE'LL BE ABLE TO DIE IN PEACE, IF IT COMES TO THAT
DON'T WORRY, I WON'T! IT'S TOO BAD, THOUGH! THAT'S ONE MANEUVER THEY NEED TO ADD TO AIR COMBAT TRAINING!
I'M ALMOST IN MY SEAT! PLEASE DON'T TELL ANYONE ABOUT THIS!
MR. UDA, I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU. YOU COBBLED TOGETHER ONE HELL OF A PLANE. HEY, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT BACK THERE?
AND SEVERAL DAYS LATER THE REST OF THE SURVIVORS WERE RESCUED.
AND SO ENDED THE WARTIME SAGA OF SHIKETA ISLAND. MR. ASHIYAMA & THE NURSE EVENTUALLY FOUND A FRIENDLY PLACE TO DITCH
IT HAS REMAINED BARREN AND DEVOID OF LIFE EVER SINCE. LIKE A DRAGONFLY NESTING GROUND IN WINTER
YOU KNOW? WHERE ONCE THERE WAS LIFE BUT NOW THERE IS NONE?

THE DRAGONFLY THAT IS BORN IN WINTER WILL FREEZE BEFORE IT CAN FLY AWAY. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS ... UNLESS EXCEPTIONAL CONDITIONS PERMIT SUCH A FLIGHT TO TAKE PLACE.
ENDE

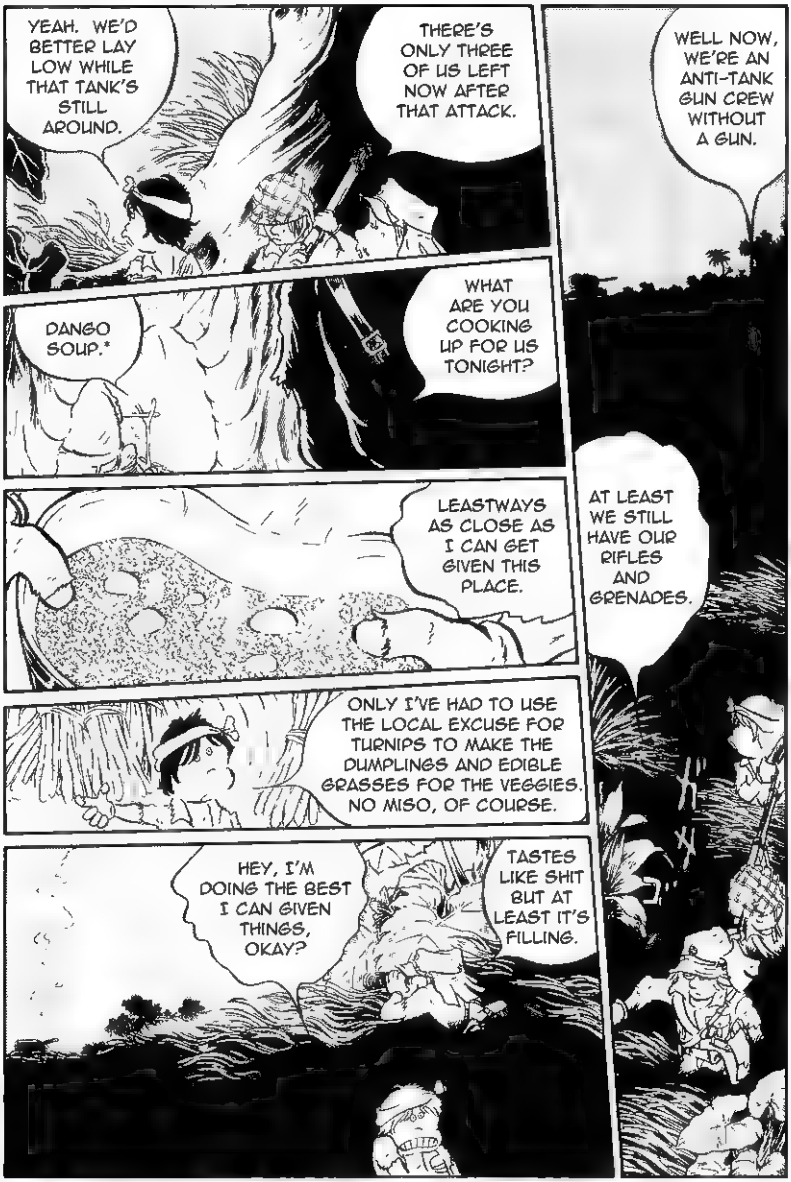
Published in Big Comic February 10, 1983 issue

THE
LEIJI
MATSUMOTO
PRESENTS
COCKPIT

THE FORMER IRA ISLAND ...
THAT USED TO BE ITS NAME, BEFORE THE FIRESTORM DURING THE WAR THAT DESTROYED ALL LIFE ON IT AND MADE IT THE BARREN WASTE THAT IT IS TODAY. HOW DID IT GET THAT WAY? WELL, IT'S QUITE A STORY ....

RED FIREFLY
MEDIUM TANK, 206 METERS TO THE RIGHT!
FIRE!!!
DAMN! OUR SHELL BOUNCED RIGHT OFF!

SO WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
IT'S TURNING THIS WAY!
RUN!!!
WEEEEEEEEE...
CCCB
M
CORRECTION. "WAS" AN ANTI-TANK GUN. IT'S STILL PATHETIC.
AND THEY CALL THAT AN ANTI-TANK GUN!


YEAH. WE'D BETTER LAY LOW WHILE THAT TANK'S STILL AROUND.
THERE'S ONLY THREE OF US LEFT NOW AFTER THAT ATTACK.
WELL NOW, WE'RE AN ANTI-TANK GUN CREW WITHOUT A GUN.
DANGO SOUP.*
WHAT ARE YOU COOKING UP FOR US TONIGHT?
LEASTWAYS AS CLOSE AS I CAN GET GIVEN THIS PLACE.
AT LEAST WE STILL HAVE OUR RIFLES AND GRENADES.
ONLY I'VE HAD TO USE THE LOCAL EXCUSE FOR TURNIPS TO MAKE THE DUMPLINGS AND EDIBLE GRASSES FOR THE VEGGIES. NO MISO, OF COURSE.
HEY, I'M DOING THE BEST I CAN GIVEN THINGS, OKAY?
TASTES LIKE SHIT BUT AT LEAST IT'S FILLING.

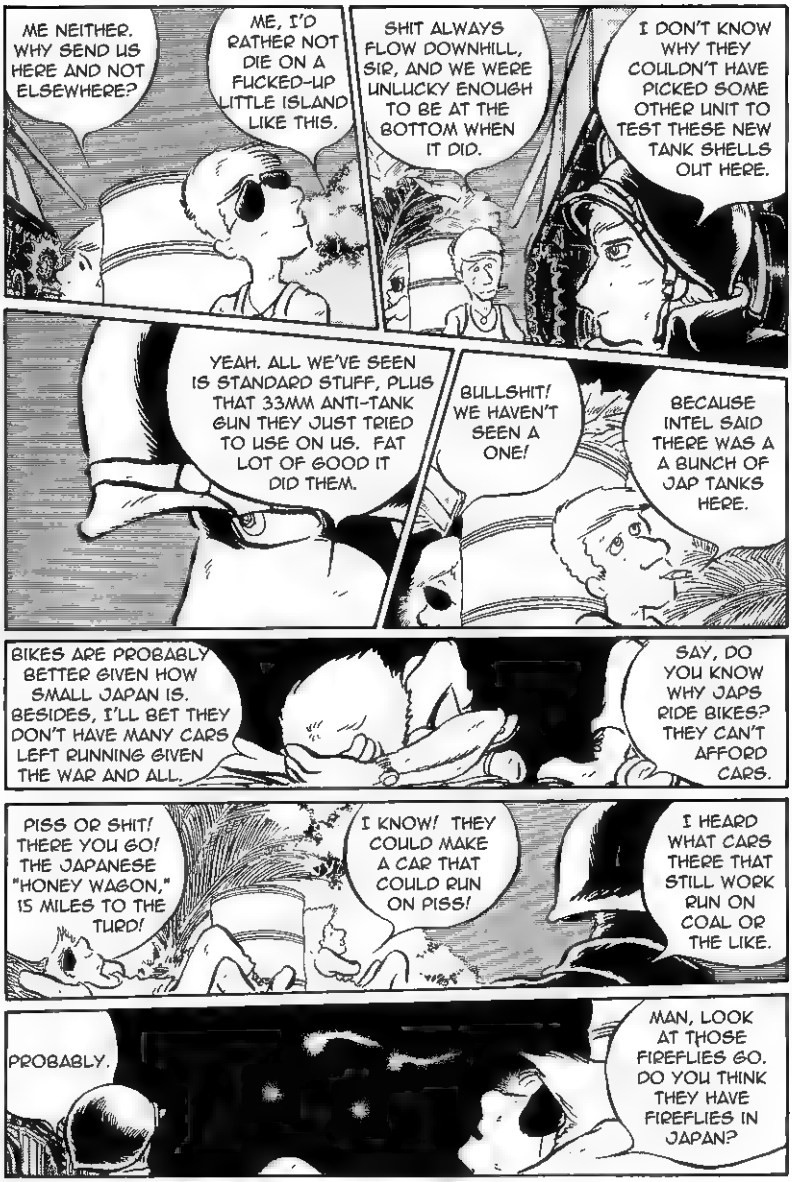
 (*) DANGO SOUP - A REGIONAL FAVORITE IN JAPAN, FEATURING DUMPLINGS SIMMERED IN VEGETABLES IN A MISO OR DASHI BROTH. IT'S VERY POPULAR IN THE OITA AND KUMAMOTO PREFECTURES OF JAPAN.

(**) SPAM CAME FROM WORLD WAR II. LOOK IT UP!

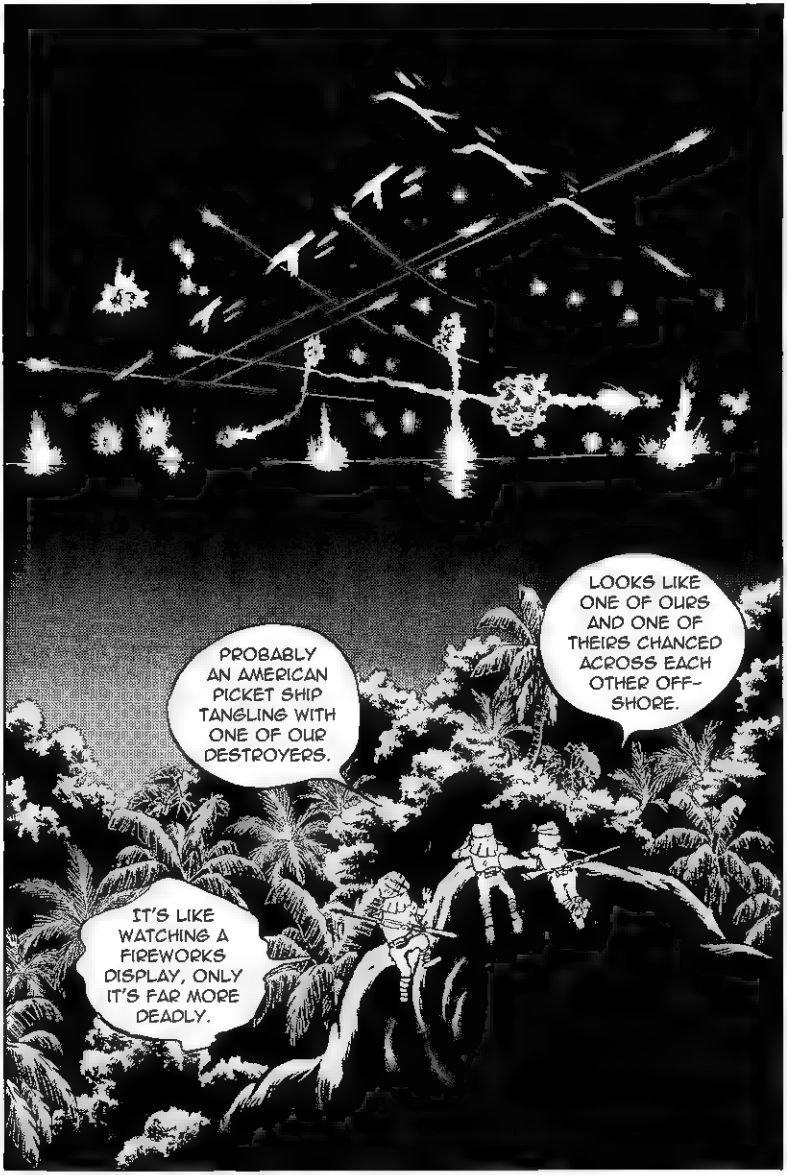
CHUGGA-CLINK-CLANK-CHUGGA-CLINK-CLANK ...
IF WE WEREN'T SO BAD OFF I'D BE WILLING TO RISK MY LIVE TO RUN OVER THERE AND GET THAT COOKED SPAM, OR WHATEVER IT IS THEY'RE COOKING OVER THERE!
MORE LIKELY A CAN OF SPAM.** STILL, MEAT ... AHHH, MEAT!
HEY! I THINK THEY'RE ENGINE COOKING!* DO YOU SMELL THAT? IT'S BEEF STEAK! OH GOD, BEEF!
TAKE IT EASY, GUYS. THERE'S NOTHING WE CAN DO ABOUT IT.
I KNOW, I KNOW. SETTLE DOWN. WE'RE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT. WE HAVE IT JUST AS BAD AS YOU DO, SO QUIT WHINING!
BY THE GODS! I'M HUNGRY, I'M FILTHY, AND I NEED A HAIRCUT! I'VE ALSO GOT FLEAS, TICKS, LICE! AM I STILL HUMAN?!
I LOOK AROUND THE CRACKS IN THE LENSES.
HOW CAN YOU SEE OUT OF THOSE THINGS, LT. KOJIMA?
THAT TANK ... IF ONLY WE COULD TAKE IT OUT ... SOMEHOW.
FACE IT, SIR. WE'RE SCREWED. THE SOONER YOU ACCEPT THAT THE BETTER OFF WE'LL BE.
I DON'T KNOW!
TELL ME, SIR. HOW ARE WE EVER GOING TO GET OUT OF THIS FIX?

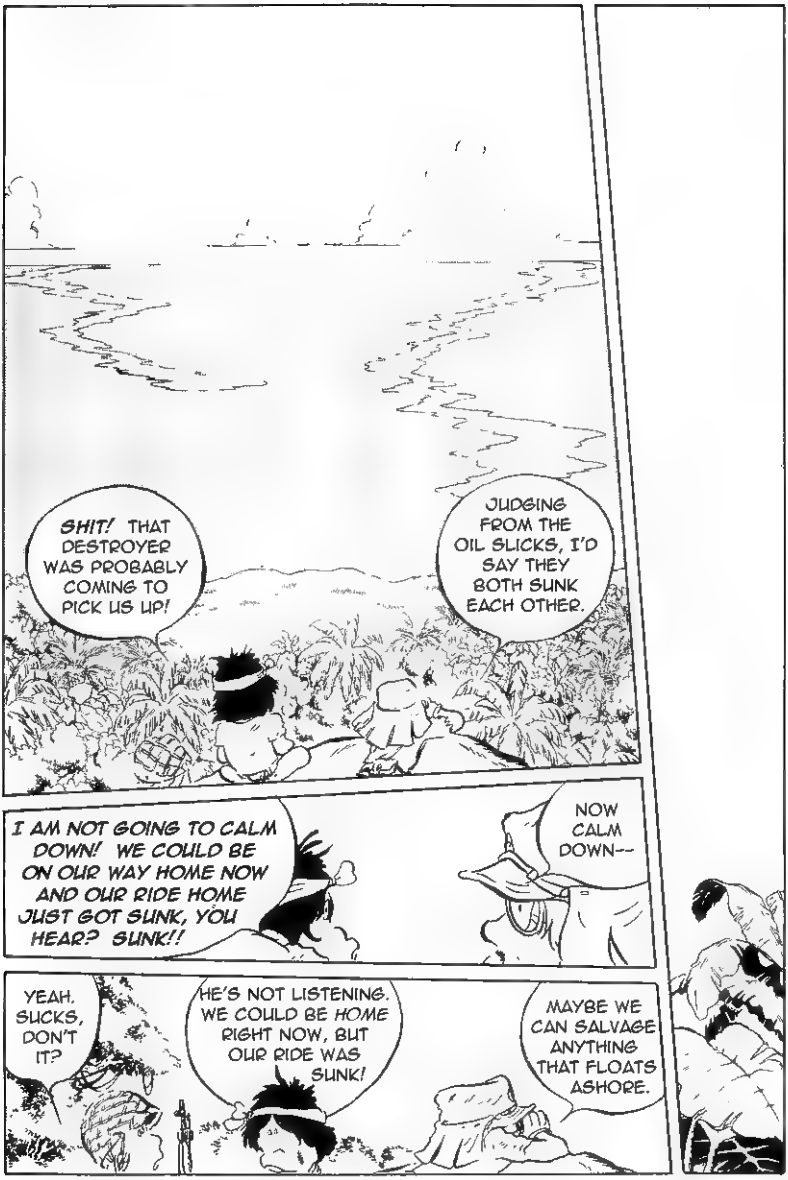
(*) YES, I KNOW THAT *ENGINE COOKING* AS DEFINED TODAY DIDN'T BECOME WIDESPREAD UNTIL THE 1980S IN THE STATES, BUT PEOPLE WERE SUPPOSEDLY DOING IT BEFORE THAT. IT'S THE ONLY THING I COULD THINK OF TO EXPLAIN GOOGLE TRANSLATE AI'S EFFORTS HERE. (R.M.)

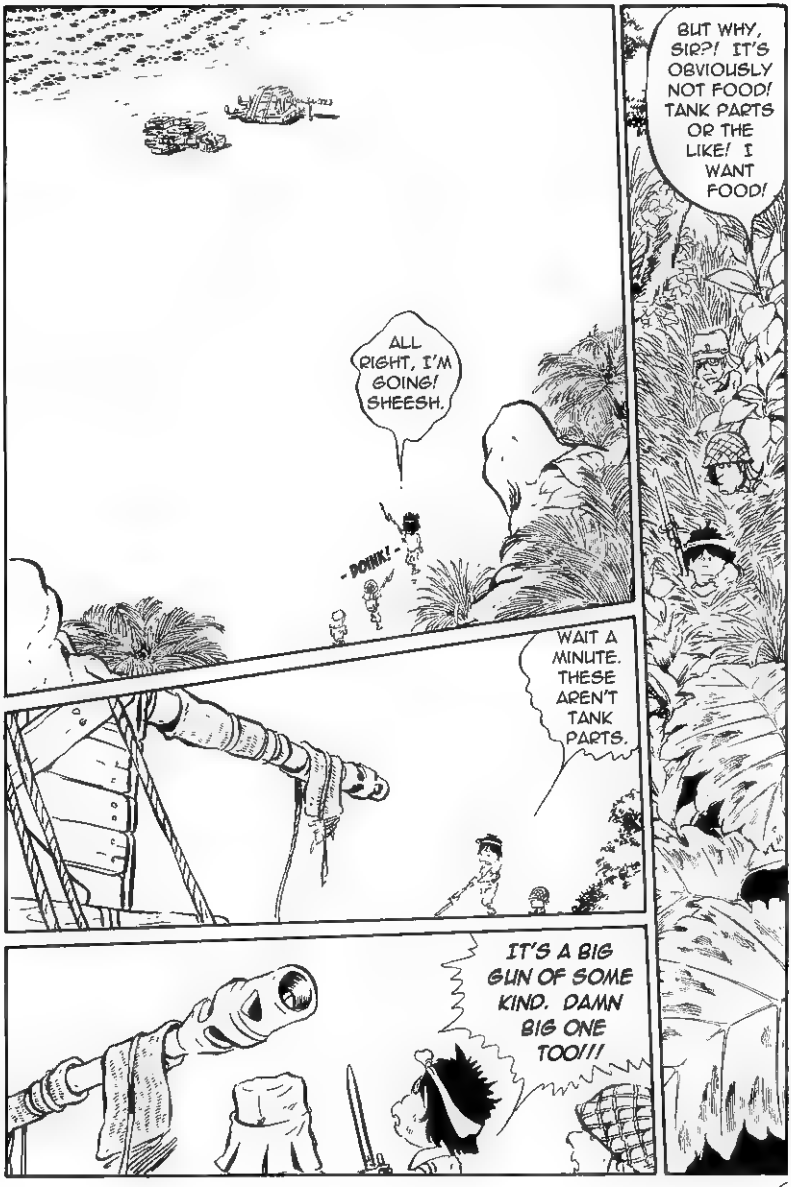
THAT'S RIGHT, AND BOTH OF YOU ARE GOING TO HELP ME. IS THAT CLEAR?
HE CAN'T ACCEPT IT. HE'S AN OFFICER. HE'S GOT TO TAKE OUT THAT TANK NO MATTER WHAT.
WHAT I'D GIVE FOR ANY DECENT FOOD RIGHT NOW.
WHAT I'D GIVE FOR A BEEF BOWL RIGHT NOW.
I FIGURE THE JAPS ARE IN THE SAME BOAT AND THINKING THE SAME THING, SIR.
SOMETIMES I WONDER WHY THEY SEND US TO LITTLE SHITHOLES LIKE THIS. WHAT ABOUT YOU, BUCKLAND?
THEY STILL CARRY ON, WAR OR NO WAR. THEY DON'T CHANGE.
LOOK AT THE FIREFLIES DANCE.

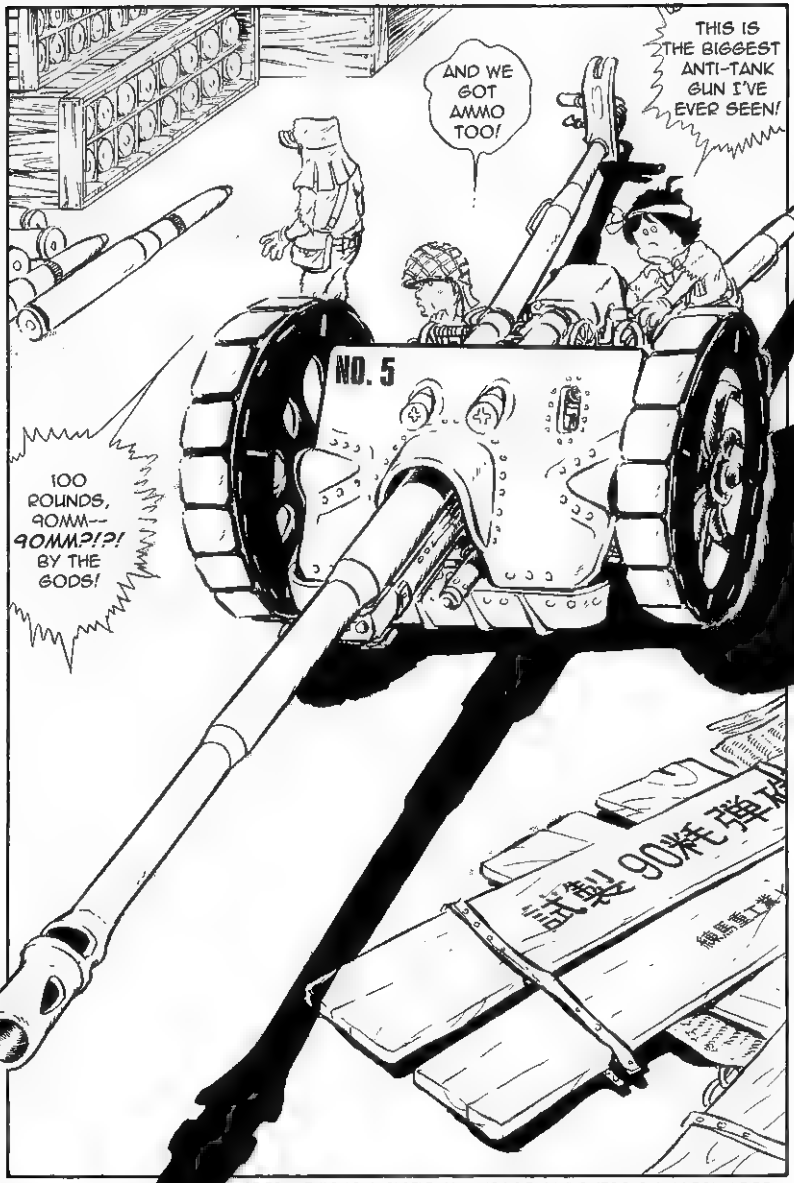

ME NEITHER. WHY SEND US HERE AND NOT ELSEWHERE?
ME, I'D RATHER NOT DIE ON A FUCKED-UP LITTLE ISLAND LIKE THIS.
SHIT ALWAYS FLOW DOWNHILL, SIR, AND WE WERE UNLUCKY ENOUGH TO BE AT THE BOTTOM WHEN IT DID.
I DON'T KNOW WHY THEY COULDN'T HAVE PICKED SOME OTHER UNIT TO TEST THESE NEW TANK SHELLS OUT HERE.
YEAH. ALL WE'VE SEEN IS STANDARD STUFF, PLUS THAT 33MM ANTI-TANK GUN THEY JUST TRIED TO USE ON US. FAT LOT OF GOOD IT DID THEM.
BULLSHIT! WE HAVEN'T SEEN A ONE!
BECAUSE INTEL SAID THERE WAS A A BUNCH OF JAP TANKS HERE.
BIKES ARE PROBABLY BETTER GIVEN HOW SMALL JAPAN IS. BESIDES, I'LL BET THEY DON'T HAVE MANY CARS LEFT RUNNING GIVEN THE WAR AND ALL.
SAY, DO YOU KNOW WHY JAPS RIDE BIKES? THEY CAN'T AFFORD CARS.
PISS OR SHIT! THERE YOU GO! THE JAPANESE "HONEY WAGON," IS MILES TO THE TURD!
I KNOW! THEY COULD MAKE A CAR THAT COULD RUN ON PISS!
I HEARD WHAT CARS THERE THAT STILL WORK RUN ON COAL OR THE LIKE.
PROBABLY.
MAN, LOOK AT THOSE FIREFLIES GO. DO YOU THINK THEY HAVE FIREFLIES IN JAPAN?

OH, THAT'S RIGHT. YOU STUDIED BUGS BEFORE THE WAR.
I'D LIKE TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE ONE.
I REMEMBER READING SOMEWHERE THAT THE GENJI FIREFLY IN JAPAN IS THE BIGGEST IN THE WORLD.
AND YOU'D STILL BE COLLECTING 'EM BUT FOR THE WAR, EH?
THE WORD IS ENTOMOLOGIST, AND YES I DID. I HAVE QUITE A PRIVATE COLLECTION BACK IN THE STATES.
... AS THEY EITHER ASCEND TO WHATEVER HEAVEN EXISTS OR STAY ON EARTH FOR WHATEVER REASON.
YOU KNOW, IN SOME CULTURES FIREFLIES REPRESENT THE SOULS OF THE RECENTLY DEAD ...
MY WIFE'S LOOKING AFTER THEM FOR ME WHILE I'M OVER HERE.
STAR SHELLS!
HEY! THOSE ARE TOO BIG FOR FIREFLIES!
OH SHIT!

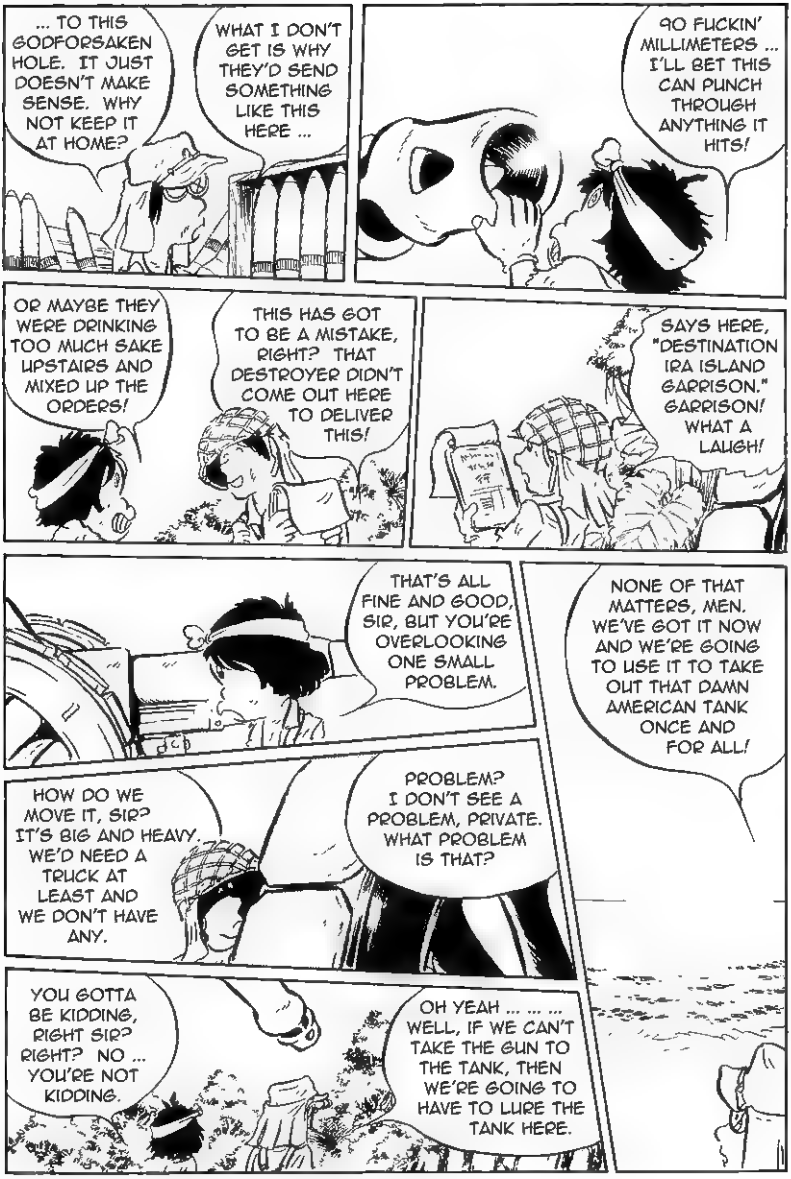

LOOKS LIKE ONE OF OURS AND ONE OF THEIRS CHANCED ACROSS EACH OTHER OFF-SHORE.
PROBABLY AN AMERICAN PICKET SHIP TANGLING WITH ONE OF OUR DESTROYERS.
IT'S LIKE WATCHING A FIREWORKS DISPLAY, ONLY IT'S FAR MORE DEADLY.


SHIT! THAT DESTROYER WAS PROBABLY COMING TO PICK US UP!
JUDGING FROM THE OIL SLICKS, I'D SAY THEY BOTH SUNK EACH OTHER.
I AM NOT GOING TO CALM DOWN! WE COULD BE ON OUR WAY HOME NOW AND OUR RIDE HOME JUST GOT SUNK, YOU HEAR? SUNK!!
NOW CALM DOWN--
YEAH, SUCKS, DON'T IT?
HE'S NOT LISTENING. WE COULD BE HOME RIGHT NOW, BUT OUR RIDE WAS SUNK!
MAYBE WE CAN SALVAGE ANYTHING THAT FLOATS ASHORE.


BUT WHY, SIR?! IT'S OBVIOUSLY NOT FOOD! TANK PARTS OR THE LIKE! I WANT FOOD!
ALL RIGHT, I'M GOING! SHEESH.
- DOINK! -
WAIT A MINUTE. THESE AREN'T TANK PARTS.
IT'S A BIG GUN OF SOME KIND. DAMN BIG ONE TOO!!!



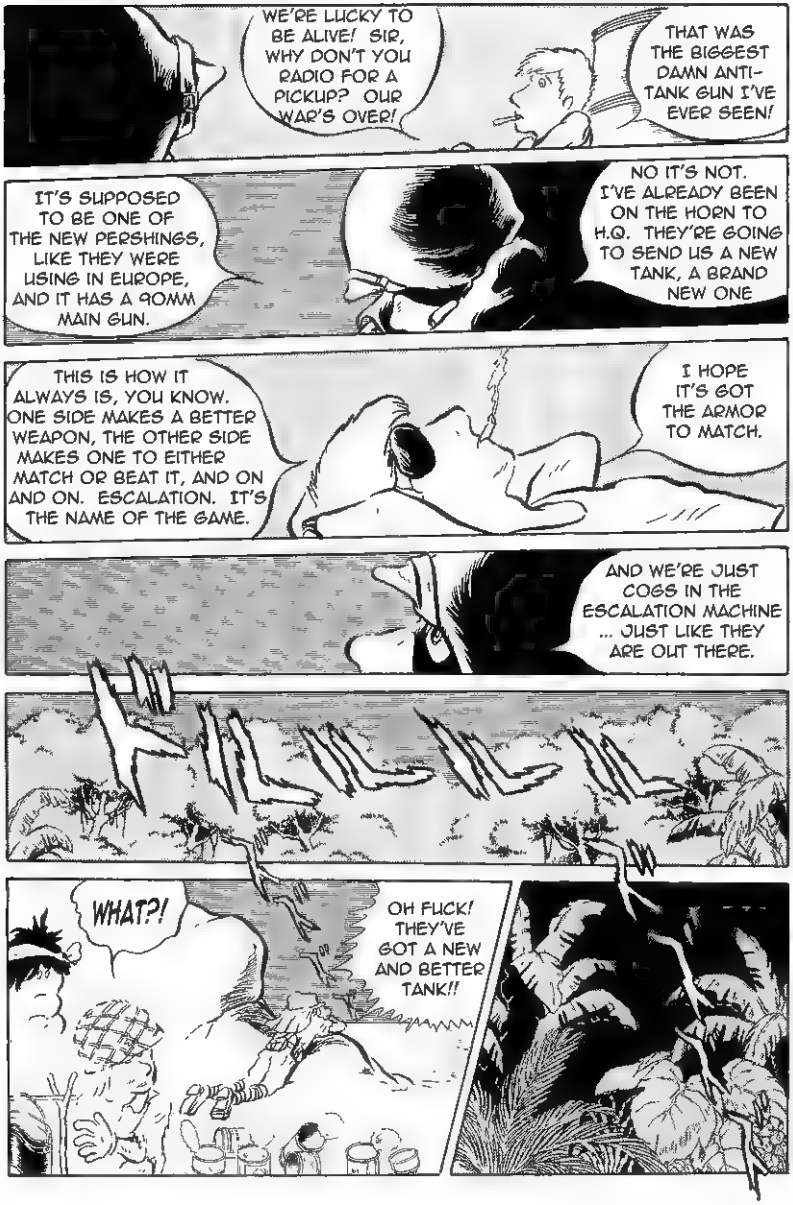
NOTE - THIS IS A FICTIONAL WEAPON INVENTED BY MATSUMOTO FOR STORYTELLING PURPOSES. THE JAPANESE NEVER HAD A 90MM ANTI-TANK GUN, NOT EVEN IN PROTOTYPE. THE CLOSEST THEY HAD TO THAT WAS AN EXPERIMENTAL 90MM AA GUN.


... TO THIS GODFORSAKEN HOLE. IT JUST DOESN'T MAKE SENSE. WHY NOT KEEP IT AT HOME?
WHAT I DON'T GET IS WHY THEY'D SEND SOMETHING LIKE THIS HERE ...
90 FUCKIN' MILLIMETERS ... I'LL BET THIS CAN PUNCH THROUGH ANYTHING IT HITS!
OR MAYBE THEY WERE DRINKING TOO MUCH SAKE UPSTAIRS AND MIXED UP THE ORDERS!
THIS HAS GOT TO BE A MISTAKE, RIGHT? THAT DESTROYER DIDN'T COME OUT HERE TO DELIVER THIS!
SAYS HERE, "DESTINATION IRA ISLAND GARRISON." GARRISON! WHAT A LAUGH!
THAT'S ALL FINE AND GOOD, SIR, BUT YOU'RE OVERLOOKING ONE SMALL PROBLEM.
NONE OF THAT MATTERS, MEN. WE'VE GOT IT NOW AND WE'RE GOING TO USE IT TO TAKE OUT THAT DAMN AMERICAN TANK ONCE AND FOR ALL!
HOW DO WE MOVE IT, SIR? IT'S BIG AND HEAVY. WE'D NEED A TRUCK AT LEAST AND WE DON'T HAVE ANY.
PROBLEM? I DON'T SEE A PROBLEM, PRIVATE. WHAT PROBLEM IS THAT?
YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING, RIGHT SIR? RIGHT? NO ... YOU'RE NOT KIDDING.
OH YEAH ... ... WELL, IF WE CAN'T TAKE THE GUN TO THE TANK, THEN WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LURE THE TANK HERE.

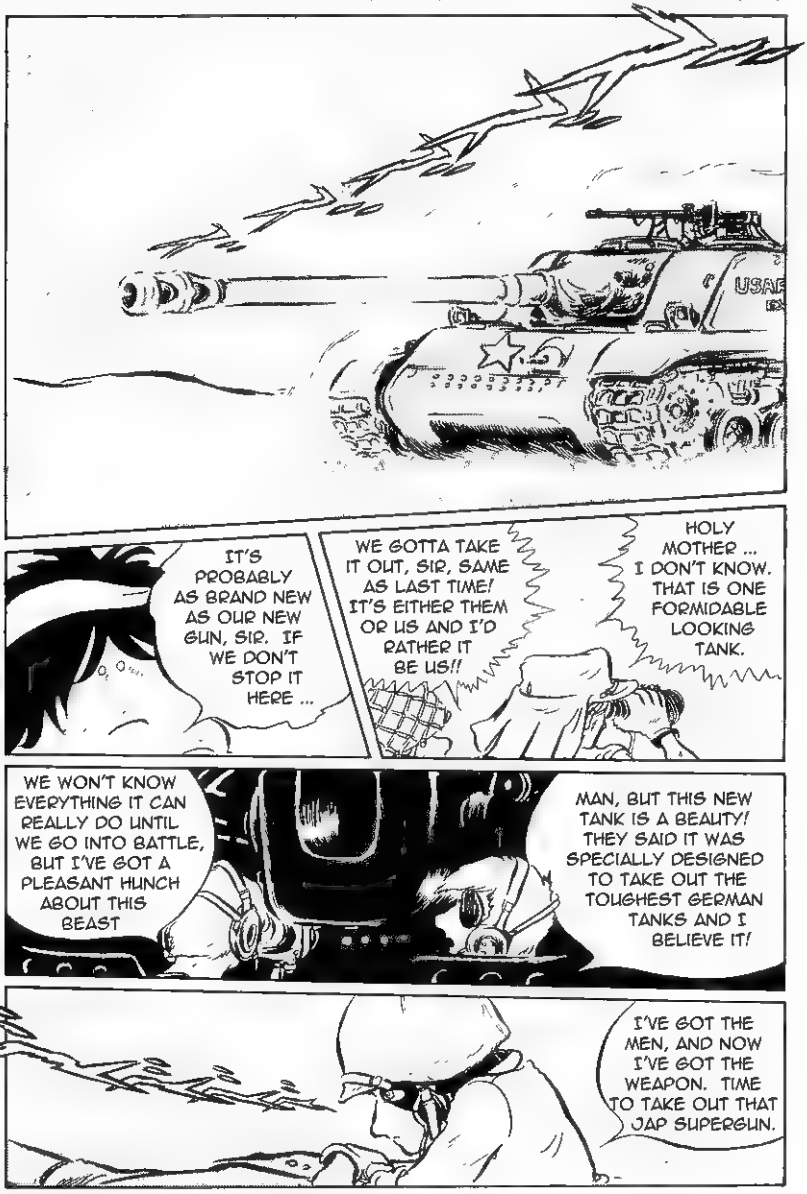
HEY GUYS? I DON'T THINK WE'LL HAVE TO GO GET THE AMERICANS. THEY'RE COMING TO US!
TRUNDLE-TRUNDLE ...
TRUNDLE-TRUNDLE ...
BY THE GODS, FOOD! THIS LAST CRATE HAD FOOD! ENOUGH TO FEED A HUNDRED PEOPLE!
TRUNDLE-TRUNDLE ...
TRUNDLE-TRUNDLE ...
TRUNDLE-TRUNDLE ...
AND THEY'RE COMING THE RIGHT WAY! TO YOUR POSTS, MEN!!
IF WE DID THEY'D GET THE GUN! NO, LT. KOMIYA IS RIGHT! WE'VE GOT TO USE THIS WHILE WE'VE GOT IT!! IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE!
WE COULD JUST RUN AWAY, YOU KNOW.
SO WHAT?!? A GUN IS A GUN! IT'S THE SAME AS BEFORE, ONLY SCALED UP!!
BUT WE'VE NEVER HANDLED A GUN THIS BIG BEFORE!
THERE HE IS!!!
COMING AROUND THE COAST LINE ...
READY TO SIGHT TARGET, SIR!
C'MON, YOU CAN DO IT, JUST LIKE ALWAYS!
DAMN, BUT THIS SHELL IS FUCKIN' HEAVY!

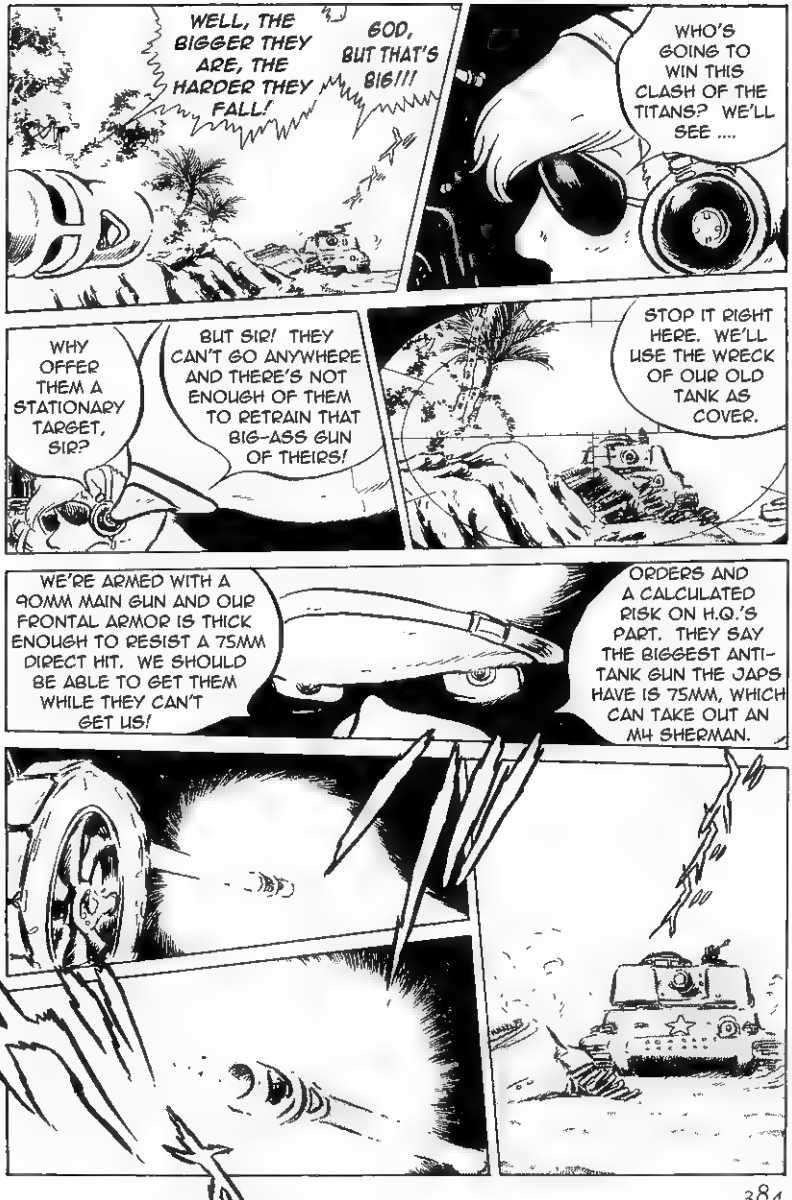
QUIT SHAKING! YOU'RE SHAKING THE GUN!
I HOPE YOU'VE GOT THE AIM AND RANGE RIGHT!
ONE SHOT! ONE FUCKIN' SHOT!! THAT MUST BE ONE HELL OF AN ANTI-TANK GUN!!!
WE'RE DISABLED! EVERYBODY BAIL OUT NOW!!!
SHIT!!!

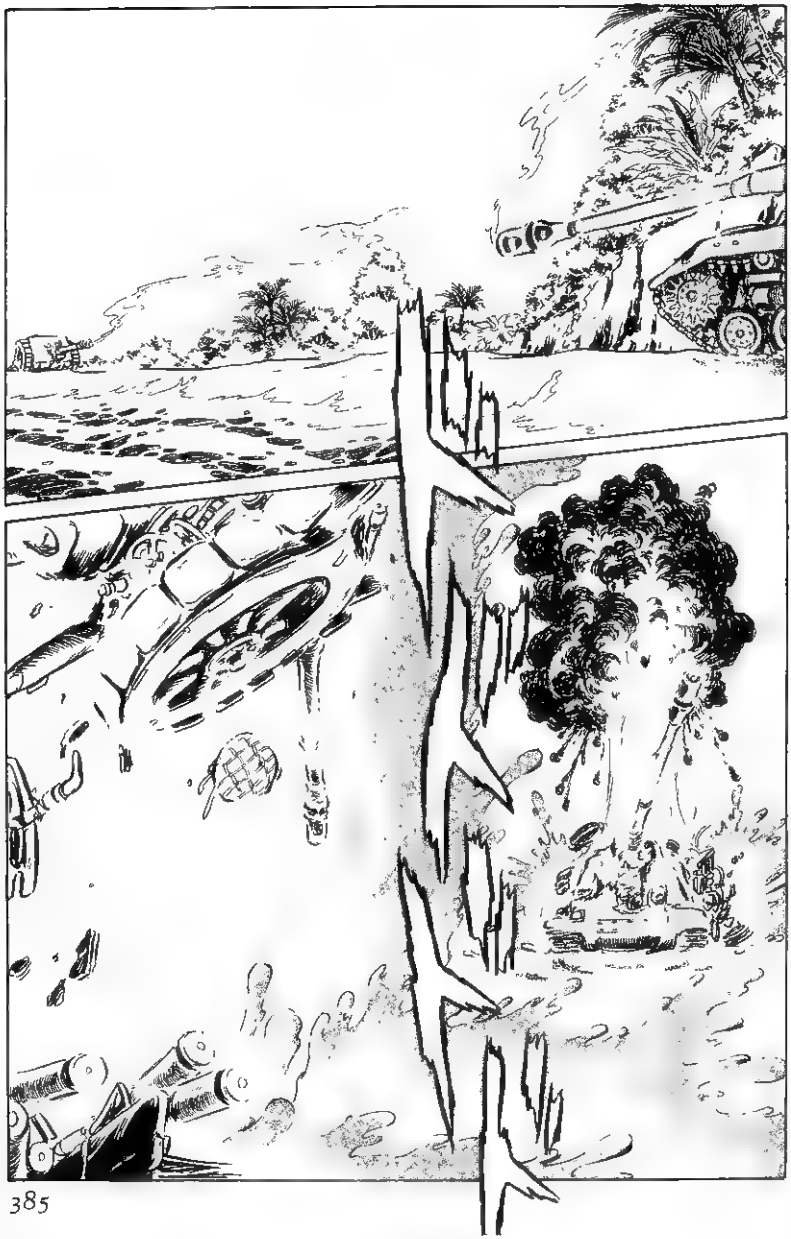
WE DID IT! WE FINALLY BLEW UP THAT DAMN TANK!!
SO WHAT? THEY CAN'T TERRORIZE US ANYMORE, SIR.
YEAH, BUT THE CREW BAILED OUT AND GOT AWAY.
MAYBE THEY'LL LEAVE NOW, BUT I DOUBT IT.
AS LONG AS THEY COULD THEY WERE GOING TO EVENTUALLY RUN US TO GROUND. NOW WE'RE MORE OR LESS RESUPPLIED AND WE'VE GOT THAT NEW ANTI-TANK GUN. THEY'VE GOT NOTHING.
IN THE MEANTIME, SIR, MAY I MAKE A SUGGESTION!
LET'S CELEBRATE WITH ALL OF OUR NEW FOOD SUPPLIES, AND THIS TIME I CAN MAKE THE SOUP RIGHT!

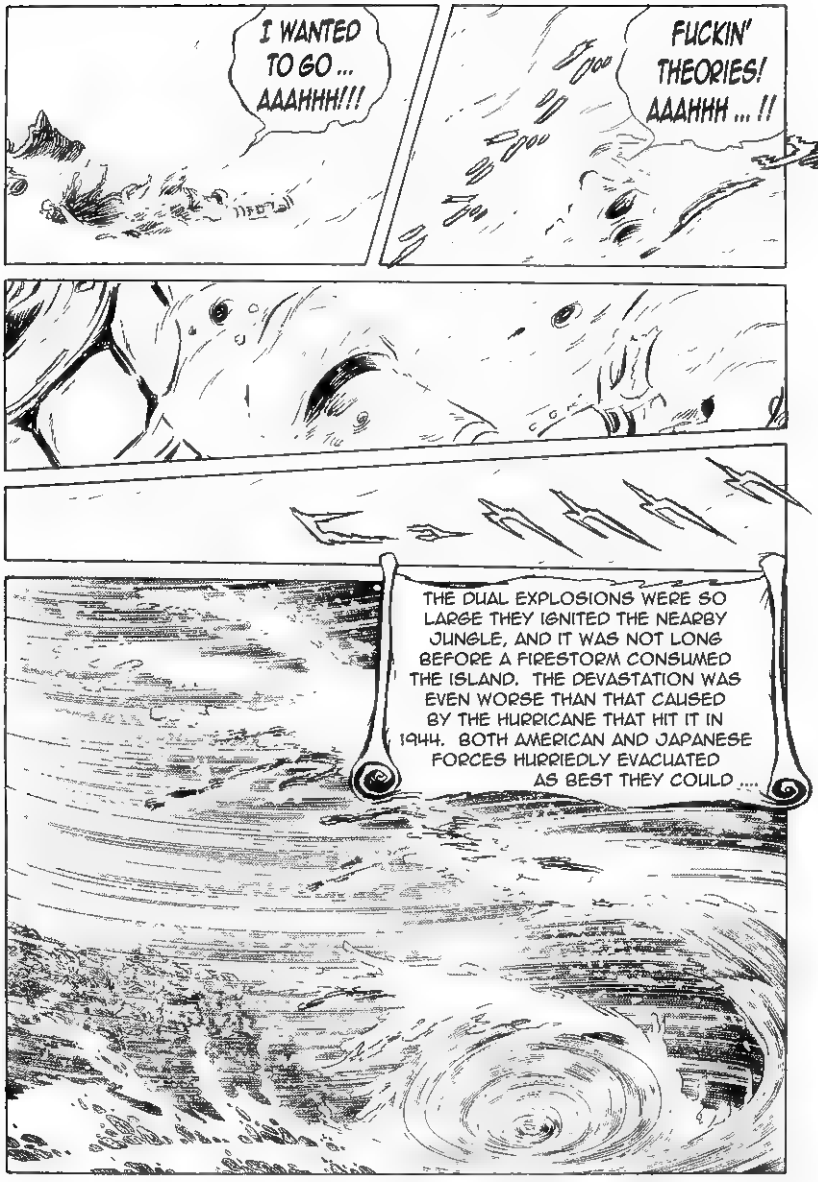

LATER THAT NIGHT ...
WE'RE LUCKY TO BE ALIVE! SIR, WHY DON'T YOU RADIO FOR A PICKUP? OUR WAR'S OVER!
THAT WAS THE BIGGEST DAMN ANTI-TANK GUN I'VE EVER SEEN!
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE NEW PERSHINGS, LIKE THEY WERE USING IN EUROPE, AND IT HAS A 90MM MAIN GUN.
NO IT'S NOT. I'VE ALREADY BEEN ON THE HORN TO H.Q. THEY'RE GOING TO SEND US A NEW TANK, A BRAND NEW ONE
THIS IS HOW IT ALWAYS IS, YOU KNOW. ONE SIDE MAKES A BETTER WEAPON, THE OTHER SIDE MAKES ONE TO EITHER MATCH OR BEAT IT, AND ON AND ON. ESCALATION. IT'S THE NAME OF THE GAME.
I HOPE IT'S GOT THE ARMOR TO MATCH.
AND WE'RE JUST COGS IN THE ESCALATION MACHINE ... JUST LIKE THEY ARE OUT THERE.
WHAT?!
OH FUCK! THEY'VE GOT A NEW AND BETTER TANK!!

NOTE – IN REAL LIFE THIS TANK WOULD HAVE BEEN A T26E4 "SUPER PERSHING." MATSUMOTO OBVIOUSLY CAME UP WITH HIS OWN DESIGN AND THE T26E4 WAS NEVER SENT TO THE PACIFIC DURING THE WAR -- BUT HEY! THIS IS FICTION! (R.M.)


USAF
IT'S PROBABLY AS BRAND NEW AS OUR NEW GUN, SIR. IF WE DON'T STOP IT HERE ...
WE GOTTA TAKE IT OUT, SIR, SAME AS LAST TIME! IT'S EITHER THEM OR US AND I'D RATHER IT BE US!!
HOLY MOTHER ... I DON'T KNOW. THAT IS ONE FORMIDABLE LOOKING TANK.
WE WON'T KNOW EVERYTHING IT CAN REALLY DO UNTIL WE GO INTO BATTLE, BUT I'VE GOT A PLEASANT HUNCH ABOUT THIS BEAST
MAN, BUT THIS NEW TANK IS A BEAUTY! THEY SAID IT WAS SPECIALLY DESIGNED TO TAKE OUT THE TOUGHEST GERMAN TANKS AND I BELIEVE IT!
I'VE GOT THE MEN, AND NOW I'VE GOT THE WEAPON. TIME TO TAKE OUT THAT JAP SUPERGUN.


WELL, THE BIGGER THEY ARE, THE HARDER THEY FALL!
GOD, BUT THAT'S BIG!!!
WHO'S GOING TO WIN THIS CLASH OF THE TITANS? WE'LL SEE ....
WHY OFFER THEM A STATIONARY TARGET, SIR?
BUT SIR! THEY CAN'T GO ANYWHERE AND THERE'S NOT ENOUGH OF THEM TO RETRAIN THAT BIG-ASS GUN OF THEIRS!
STOP IT RIGHT HERE. WE'LL USE THE WRECK OF OUR OLD TANK AS COVER.
WE'RE ARMED WITH A 90MM MAIN GUN AND OUR FRONTAL ARMOR IS THICK ENOUGH TO RESIST A 75MM DIRECT HIT. WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO GET THEM WHILE THEY CAN'T GET US!
ORDERS AND A CALCULATED RISK ON H.Q.'S PART. THEY SAY THE BIGGEST ANTI-TANK GUN THE JAPS HAVE IS 75MM, WHICH CAN TAKE OUT AN M4 SHERMAN.




I WANTED TO GO... AAAHHH!!!
FUCKIN' THEORIES! AAAHHH... !!
THE DUAL EXPLOSIONS WERE SO LARGE THEY IGNITED THE NEARBY JUNGLE, AND IT WAS NOT LONG BEFORE A FIRESTORM CONSUMED THE ISLAND. THE DEVASTATION WAS EVEN WORSE THAN THAT CAUSED BY THE HURRICANE THAT HIT IT IN 1944. BOTH AMERICAN AND JAPANESE FORCES HURRIEDLY EVACUATED AS BEST THEY COULD ....

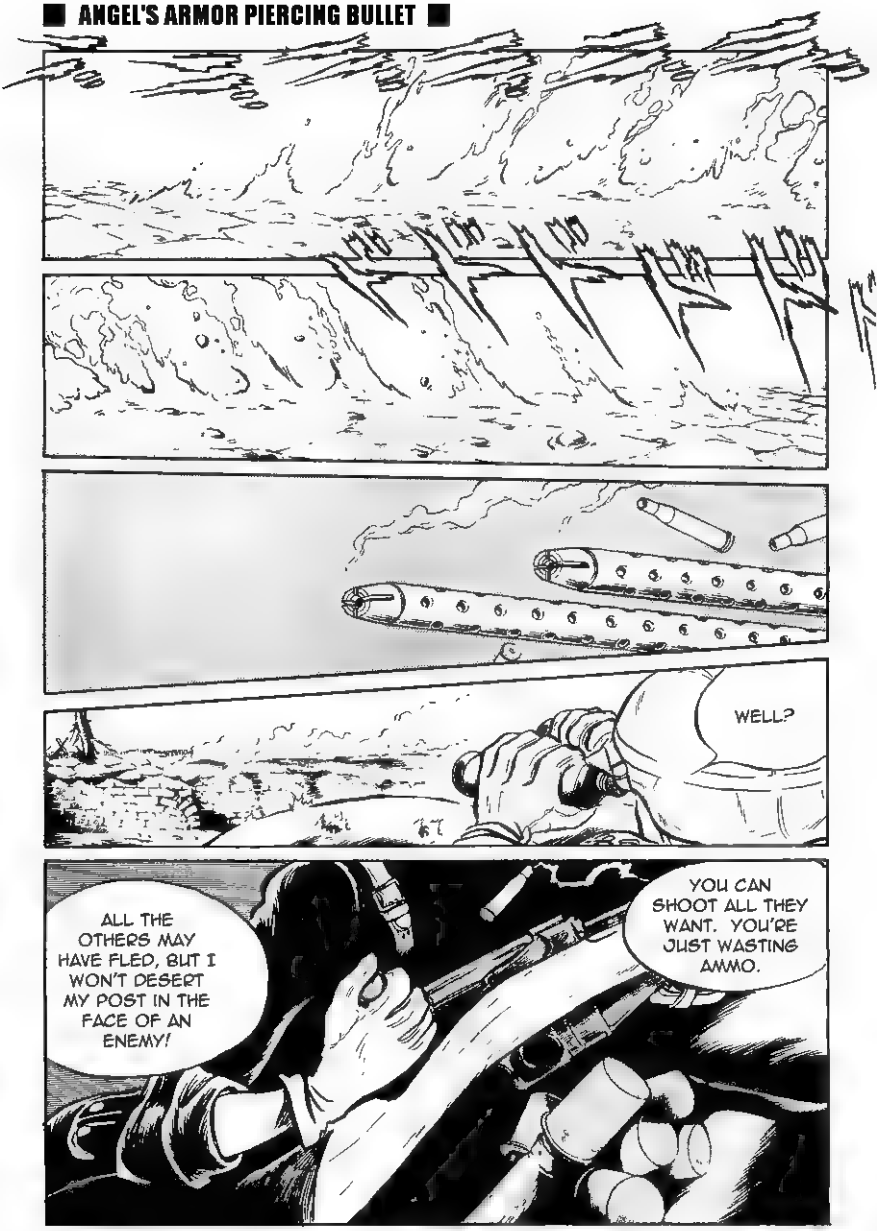
TODAY IRA ISLAND RESEMBLES THE SURFACE OF THE MOON. THERE IS NO LIFE ON IT ANYWYERE.
WHAT FEW VISITORS IT HAS STILL SOMETIMES FIND TRACES OF ITS WORLD WAR II ERA OCCUPANTS. A LUMP OF BURNED RUST HERE, ANOTHER OVER THERE, AND SO ON. SOMETIMES THEY EVEN FIND CHARRED BONES. THOSE WHO DIED THERE AND WHOSE REMAINS HAVE NOT YET BEEN SENT HOME.
IRA ISLAND WAS GIVEN A NEW NAME AFTER THE END OF THE WAR, AND IN MEMORY OF WHAT HAPPENED THERE. IT IS OFFICIALLY KNOWN TODAY AS YOMI ISLAND, WHICH TRANSLATES AS "ISLE OF THE DEAD."

THE
LEIJI
MATSUMOTO
PRESENTS
COCKPIT

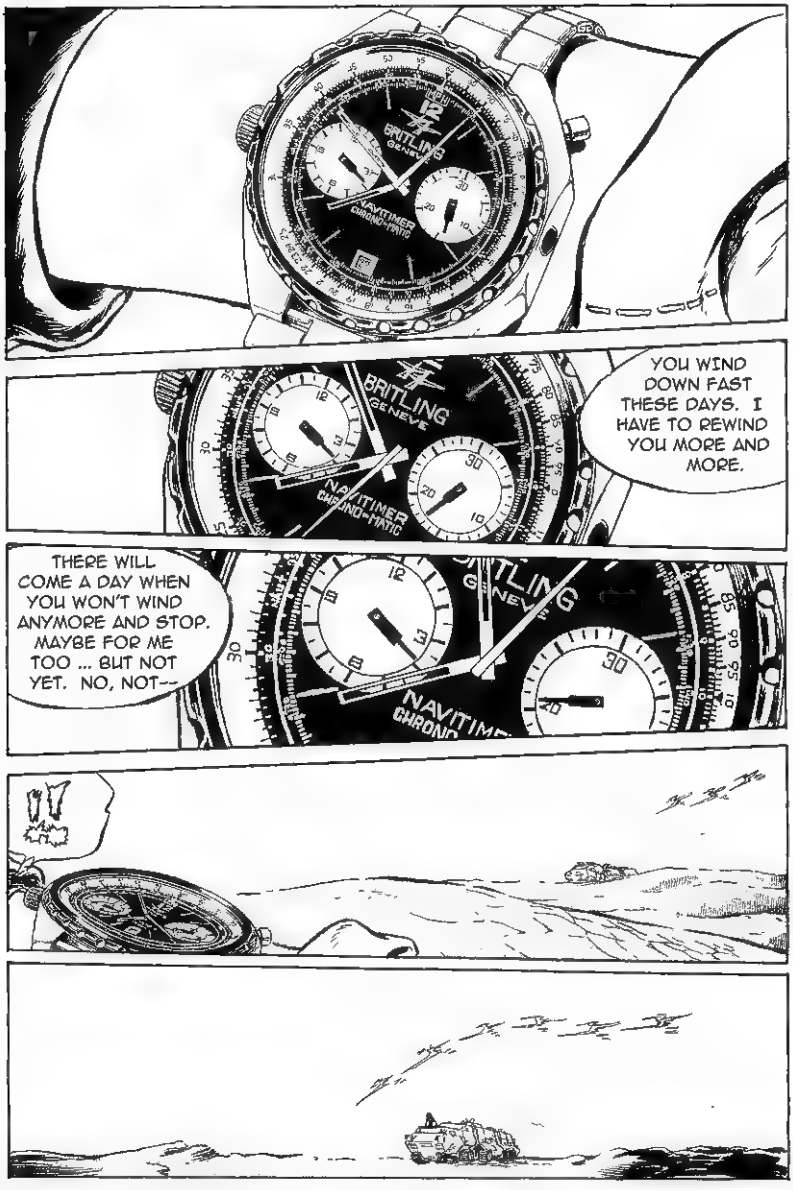
I HAVEN'T SEEN ANY MOVEMENT ON THEIR SIDE ON THE LINE ALL WEEK.
WE'VE GOT ALL OF THEIR SUPPLY LINES CUT OFF. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME.
SEE THAT TREE TO THE RIGHT OVER THERE? I'VE WATCHED THAT CORPSE UNDER IT MOULDER AWAY INTO BONES THIS ENTIRE TIME.
OKAY THEN. DO WE RISK GOING OUT?

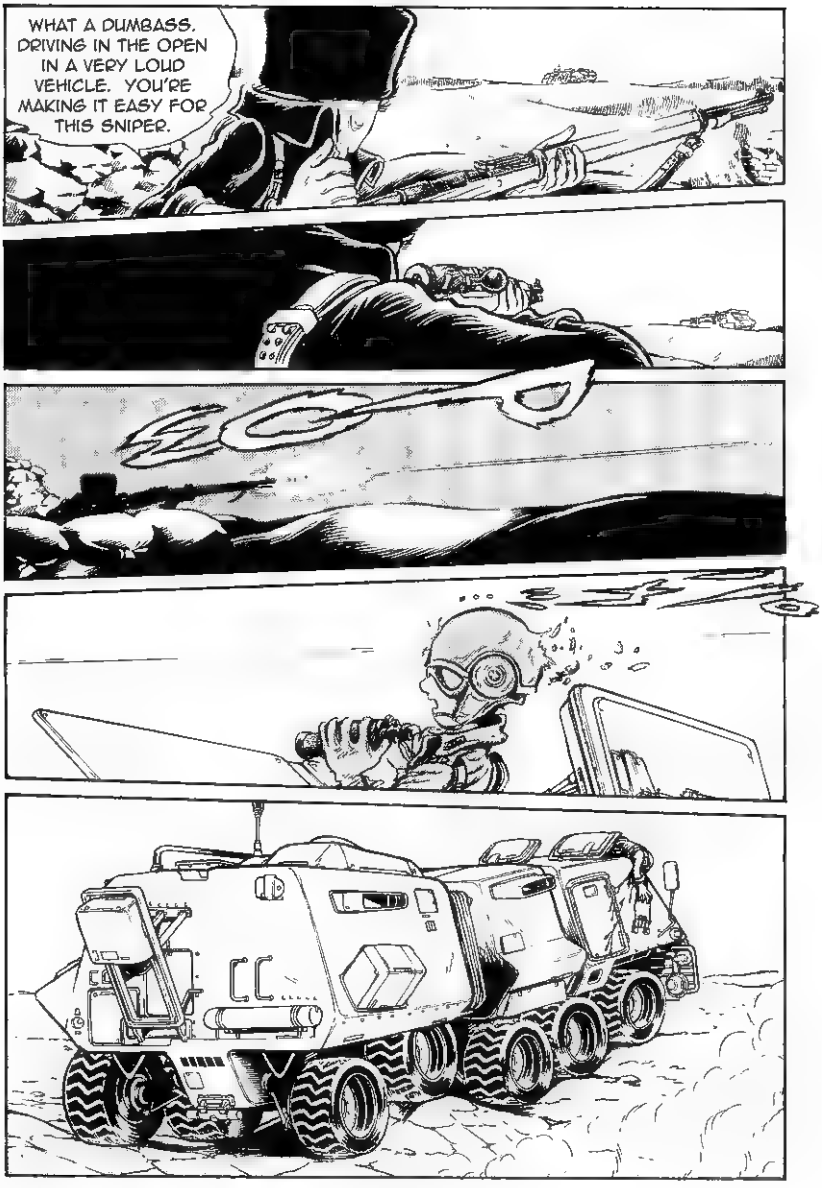
ANGEL'S ARMOR PIERCING BULLET

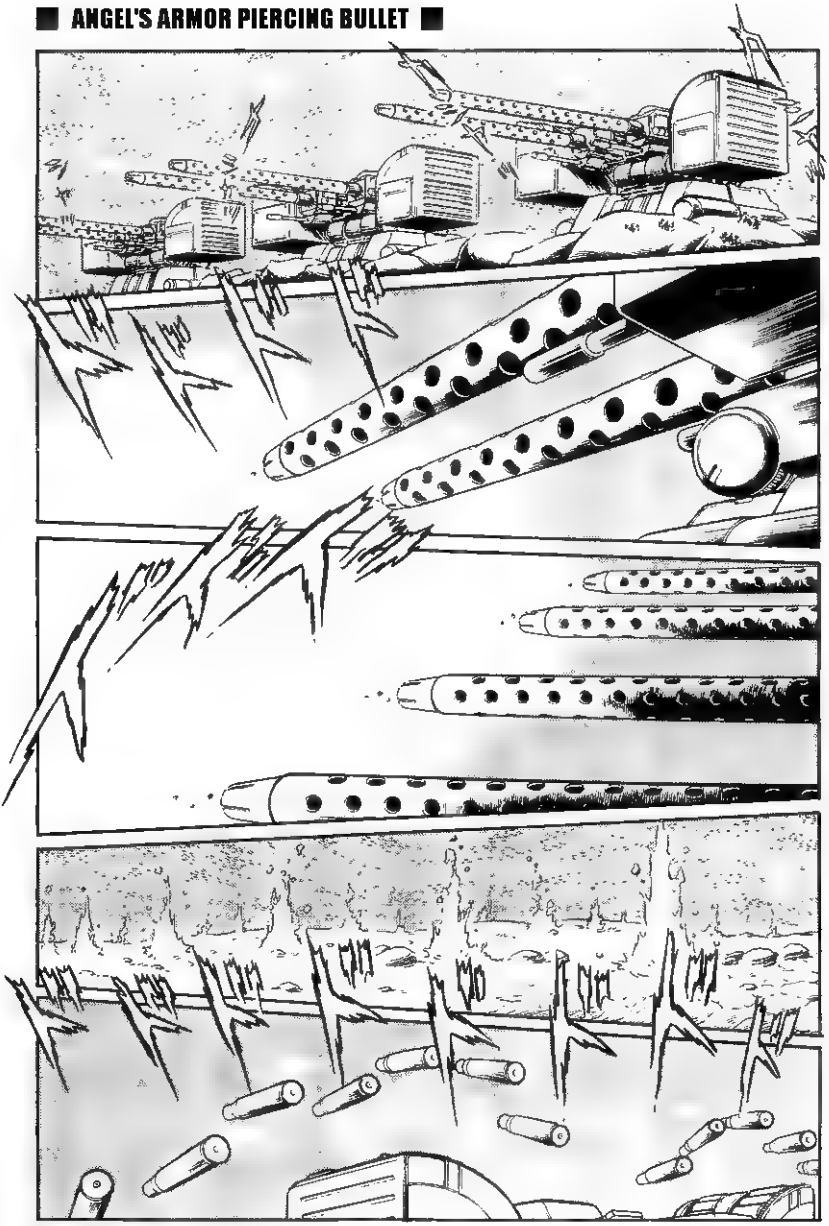
DID ANYONE SEE WHERE THAT SHOT CAME FROM?!
SON OF A BITCH!!!
FUCK. NOT A SIGN. WHOEVER IT IS THEY MUST BE USING SMOKELESS GUNPOWDER.
SUSTAINED TRAVERSING FIRE, 200-300 ROUNDS PER GUN!! DO IT!!!
I WANT ALL AUTOGUNS TO SWEEP THE ENTIRE LINE DOWN LOW!

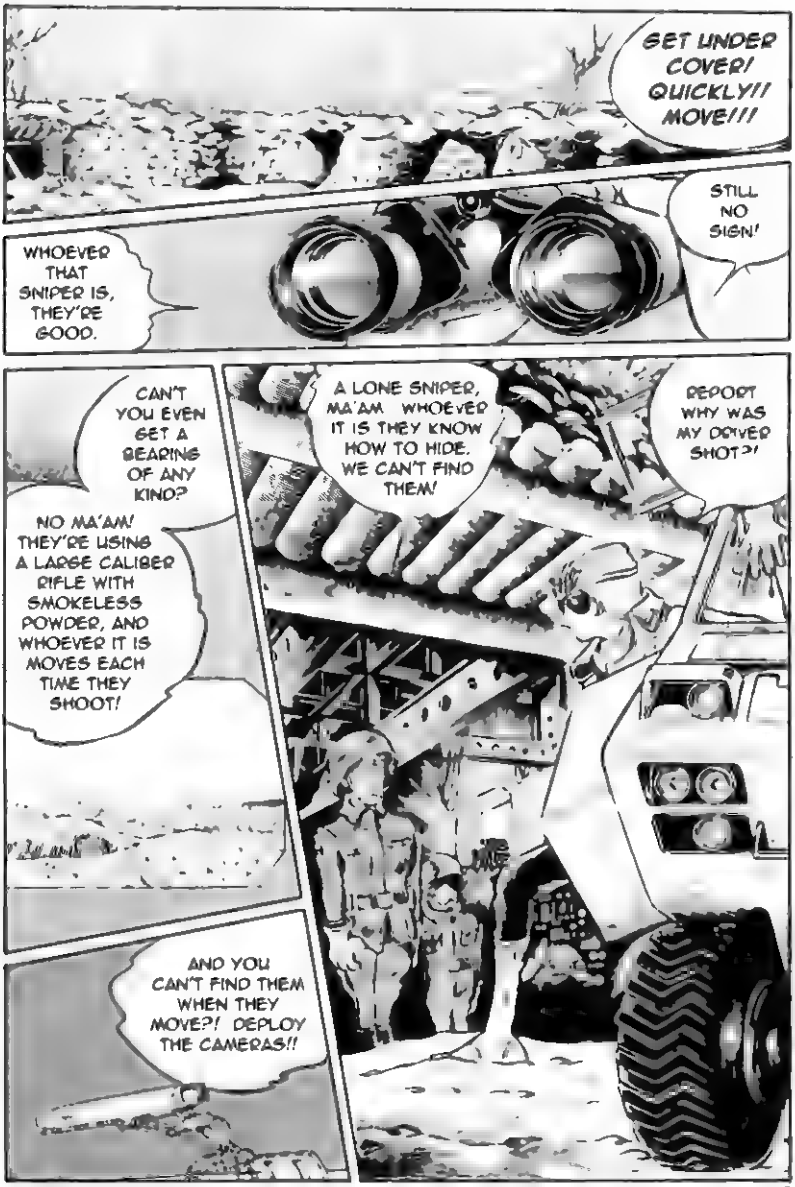

WELL?
ALL THE OTHERS MAY HAVE FLED, BUT I WON'T DESERT MY POST IN THE FACE OF AN ENEMY!
YOU CAN SHOOT ALL THEY WANT. YOU'RE JUST WASTING AMMO.

THE REST OF YOU WHO STILL COULD LEFT, BUT I WON'T.
MY ENEMY STILL LIVES.
AS LONG AS THEY'RE HERE, SO AM I.
ISN'T THAT RIGHT? OH, I FORGOT. YOU'RE THE SILENT TYPE.
THEN AGAIN, YOUR CLOCK HAS STOPPED. MINE IS STILL TICKING.
AS LONG AS I KEEP YOU WOUND AND NOTHING ELSE HAPPENS, YOU'LL TICK. AS LONG AS I STAY WOUND AND KEEP MY EYES OPEN, SO WILL I.
YOU'RE STILL TICKING TOO. WE'RE TWO OF A KIND.


BRITLING
GENEVE
NAVITIMER
CHRONO-MATIC
YOU WIND DOWN FAST THESE DAYS. I HAVE TO REWIND YOU MORE AND MORE.
THERE WILL COME A DAY WHEN YOU WON'T WIND ANYMORE AND STOP. MAYBE FOR ME TOO ... BUT NOT YET. NO, NOT--


WHAT A DUMBASS. DRIVING IN THE OPEN IN A VERY LOUD VEHICLE. YOU'RE MAKING IT EASY FOR THIS SNIPER.



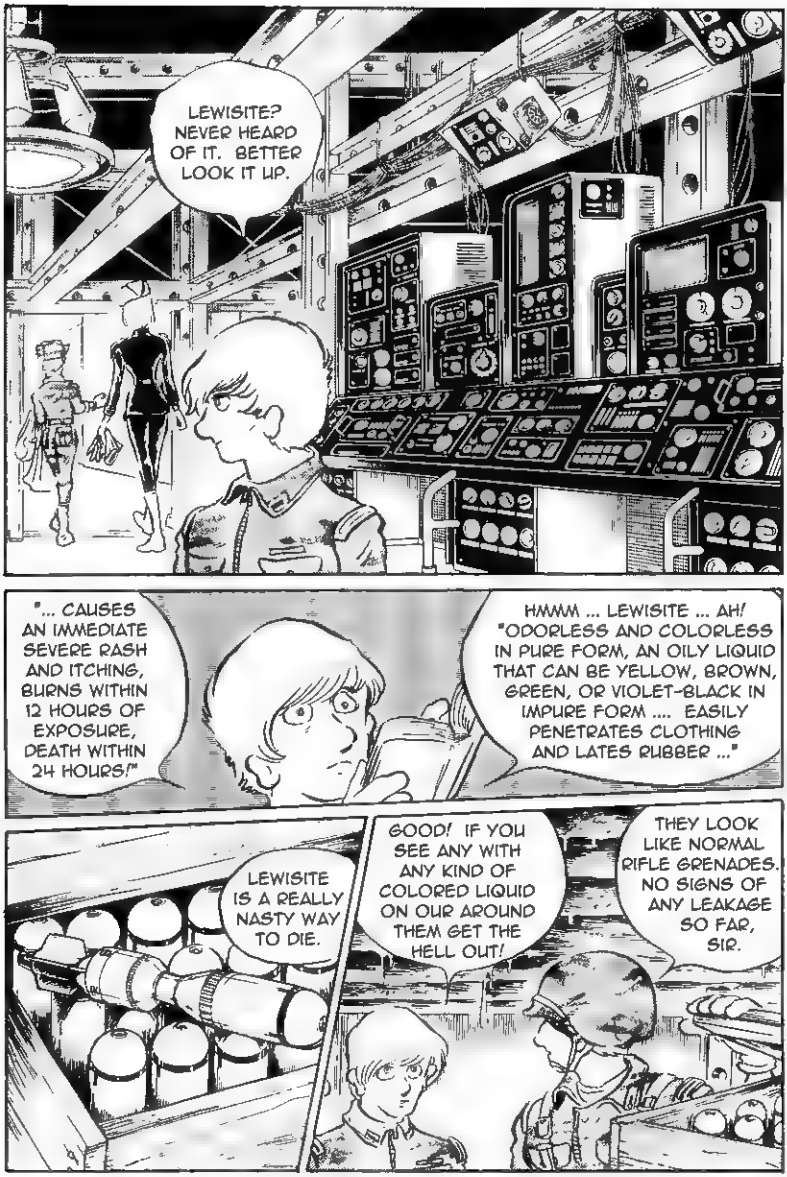

SET UNDER COVER! QUICKLY!!! MOVE!!!
STILL NO SIGN!
WHOEVER THAT SNIPER IS, THEY'RE GOOD.
CAN'T YOU EVEN GET A BEARING OF ANY KIND?
NO MA'AM! THEY'RE USING A LARGE CALIBER RIFLE WITH SMOKELESS POWDER, AND WHOEVER IT IS MOVES EACH TIME THEY SHOOT!
A LONE SNIPER, MA'AM WHOEVER IT IS THEY KNOW HOW TO HIDE. WE CAN'T FIND THEM!
REPORT WHY WAS MY DRIVER SHOT?!
AND YOU CAN'T FIND THEM WHEN THEY MOVE?! DEPLOY THE CAMERAS!!

WE'VE CUT OFF THEIR SUPPLIES. THEIR ARMY HAS FLED SAVE FOR THIS SNIPER, AND THAT'S STOPPING YOU?!?
I WAS JUST PASSING THROUGH, BUT GUESS I NEED TO TAKE COMMAND.
YOU WILL FIND THAT SNIPER. YOU WILL KILL THAT SNIPER, OR I'LL PERSONALLY BUST YOU SO FAR DOWN RANK THAT YOU'LL HAVE TO CLIMB THE STAIRS EVERY TIME YOU NEED TO TAKE A SHIT. IS THAT CLEAR?
LIEUTENANT, LET ME MAKE THIS ABSOLUTELY CLEAR.
AND WHEN THEY ASK YOU WHY YOU HAVE TO REACH UP TO WIPE YOUR ASS, YOU WILL TELL THEM THAT IT WAS CAPTAIN NEWMAN, SPECIAL INSPECTOR FOR THE 17TH INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, THAT PUT YOU IN THAT STATE. UNDERSTAND?
WHAT'S THIS? "BACHELOR OF FINE ARTS?!" OH MY! YOU'RE A PAINTER!
OH, YOU WENT TO COLLEGE BEFORE YOU WERE DRAFTED! YOU EVEN HAVE A DEGREE!
HMMM ... LET'S SEE .... OTHER THAN THIS FUCK-UP YOU HAVE QUITE THE RESUME, LIEUTENANT.

I'LL SEE THAT YOU'RE SERVED, MA'AM!
SURELY A PAINTER HAS MORE IMAGINATION THAN A SNIPER? BUT ENOUGH OF THAT. I'M HUNGRY.
IT WAS ... ADEQUATE.
OUR COOK DID HIS BEST. WAS THE FOOD TO YOUR LIKING, MA'AM?
ALL LIVING THINGS HUNGER. FOOD, SEX, ATTENTION, WHATEVER. BY THE WAY ....
DO YOU KNOW WHAT EATING AND SEX HAVE IN COMMON? HUNGER.
... HAVE YOU TRIED MORTARS ON THE SNIPER?
I KNOW SOMETHING YOU HAVEN'T TRIED. IT'S WORTH A SHOT.
SO YOU'VE TRIED EVERYTHING YOU HAVE HERE.
FUCK.
... THE SNIPER MOVES AS SOON AS WE START UP.
YES MA'AM. BUT ...

POISON GAS.
GAS ... ?!?
BUT MA'AM! WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, NOBODY'S TOUCHED THAT BUNKER IN TWENTY YEARS! USE OF GAS IS FORBIDDEN UNDER--
I SEEM TO RECALL THERE'S A LEWISITE* BUNKER NOT FAR FROM HERE, AND IT'LL ALSO HAVE ALL THE STUFF YOU NEED TO FIT YOUR TROOPS FOR GAS COMBAT.
THIS IS AN EXCEPTIONAL CASE, AND MY COMMAND HAS AUTHORIZATION IN SUCH CASES. I CAN'T GET TO WHERE I'M GOING IF THAT SNIPER IS STILL OUT THERE.
... AND IF I SAY WE'RE GOING TO USE GAS THEN WE WILL. CLEAR?
--BUT I'M IN CHARGE NOW ...
WE USE GAS TOMORROW. CLEAR?
Y-YES MA'AM. WE USE GAS TOMORROW. ABSOLUTELY CLEAR.

 (*) NOTE - LEWISITE GAS IS FOR REAL. ORIGINALLY INVENTED FOR WORLD WAR I, IT IS FAMOUS FOR ITS NOT BEING GOOD FOR ANYTHING OTHER THAN FOR USE AS A CHEMICAL WARFARE AGENT. LOOK IT UP!

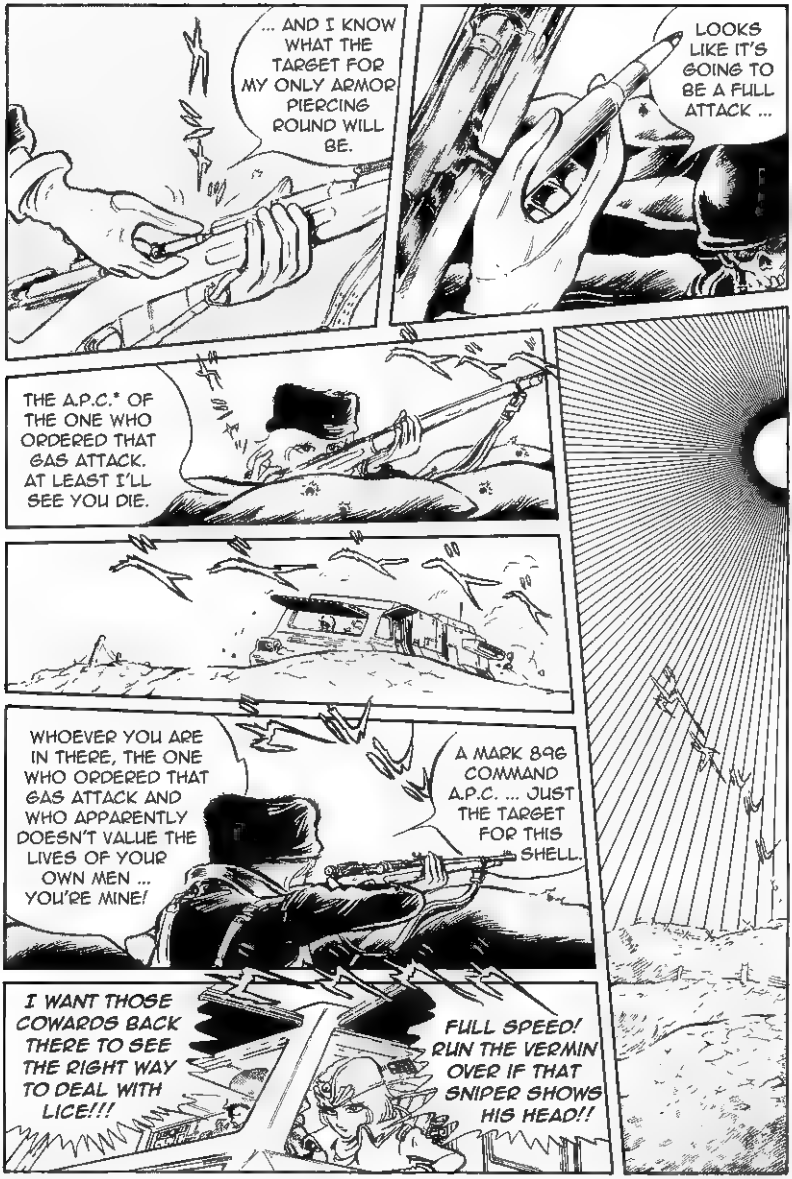

LEWISITE? NEVER HEARD OF IT. BETTER LOOK IT UP.
"... CAUSES AN IMMEDIATE SEVERE RASH AND ITCHING, BURNS WITHIN 12 HOURS OF EXPOSURE, DEATH WITHIN 24 HOURS!"
HMMM ... LEWISITE ... AH! "ODORLESS AND COLORLESS IN PURE FORM, AN OILY LIQUID THAT CAN BE YELLOW, BROWN, GREEN, OR VIOLET-BLACK IN IMPURE FORM .... EASILY PENETRATES CLOTHING AND LATES RUBBER ..."
LEWISITE IS A REALLY NASTY WAY TO DIE.
GOOD! IF YOU SEE ANY WITH ANY KIND OF COLORED LIQUID ON OUR AROUND THEM GET THE HELL OUT!
THEY LOOK LIKE NORMAL RIFLE GRENADES. NO SIGNS OF ANY LEAKAGE SO FAR, SIR.

WHUMP!!!
WHUMP!!!
WHUMP!!!
WHUMP!!!
WHUMP!!!
HMMPH! NICE TRY, NO CIGAR I HAVE A GAS MASK
PEHSSSHHH...
FOOM!!!
FOOM!!!
FOOM!!!
FOOM!!!

WELL, OLD FRIEND, I'LL BE JOINING YOU SOON ... BUT NOT BEFORE I USE MY LAST ARMOR PIERCING ROUND TO TAKE OUT THAT VEHICLE ... PROVIDED IT DOESN'T BLOW UP IN MY GUN WHEN I FIRE IT.
THAT NEW ARRIVAL FROM THAT VEHICLE MUST HAVE MADE THEM OPEN THEIR OLD GAS GRENADE BUNKER.
THESE KIND OF BULLETS WEREN'T MADE TO FIRE FROM RIFLES ... BUT IT'S ALL I'VE GOT.
FOR YOU AND THE REST, OLD FRIEND.
IT'LL EAT THROUGH MY CLOTHES, AND THEN ... I'VE GOT ONLY ONE DAY TO TAKE THAT THING OUT.
I'M STARTING TO ITCH. MUST BE LEWISITE.
WHAT ARE YOU STARING AT? IT'S BLOWING AWAY FROM US. THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT. IN A MINUTE OR TWO IT WILL CLEAR ... AND THEN WE'LL SEE THE RESULTS.
2500 SQUARE METERS AT LEAST. EXCELLENT PATTERN OF COVERAGE, LIEUTENANT. I COMMEND YOU.

(*) "CW" - MILITARY ABBREVIATION FOR "CHEMICAL WARFARE"

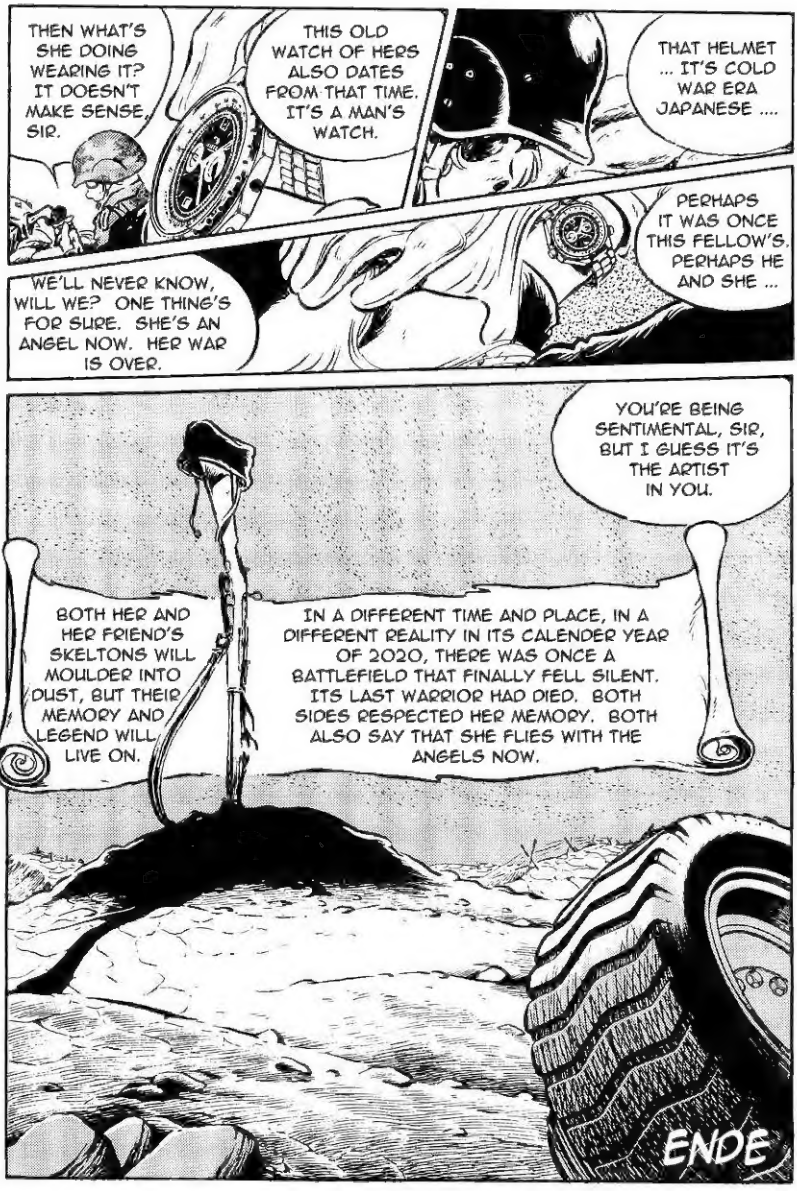
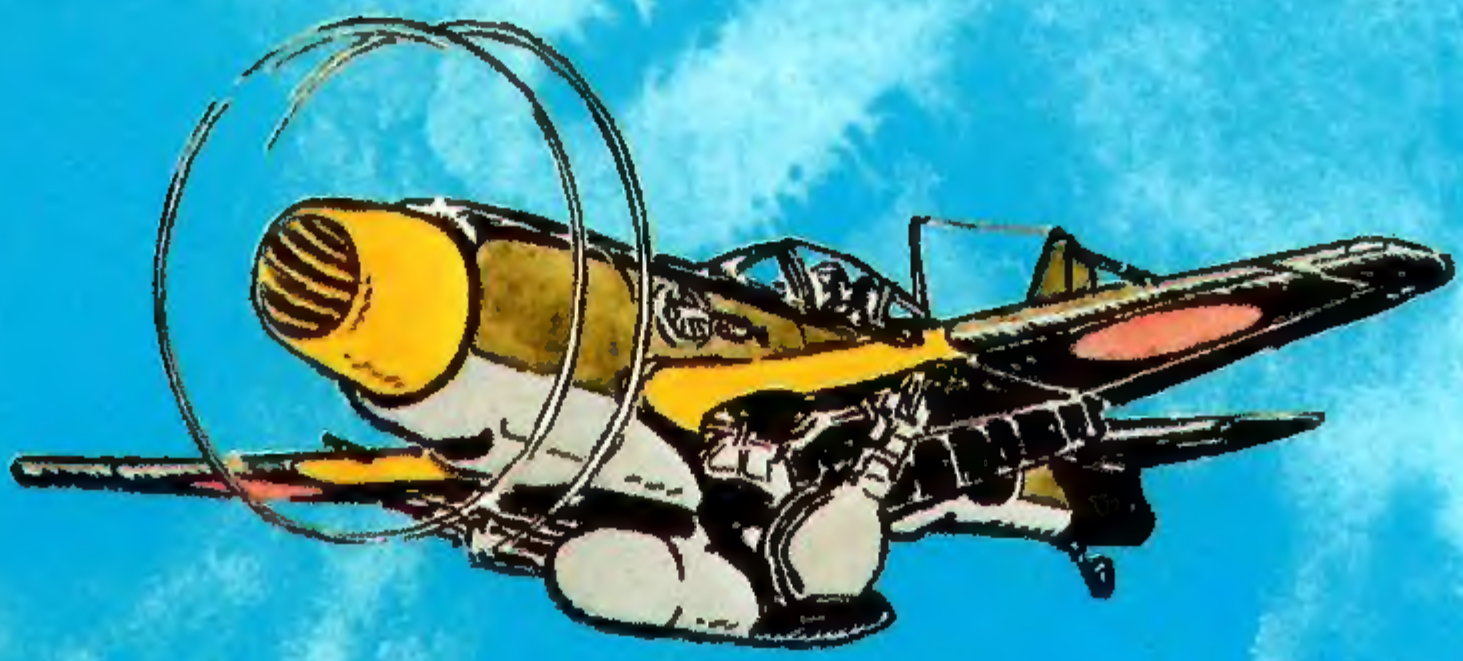
Y-Y-YES MA'AM. I ACCEPT THE SUMMARY JUDGEMENT OF MY SUPERIOR OFFICER, MA'AM.
LIEUTENANT ... 'SIGH' .. DESPITE YOUR BEST EFFORTS THIS OPERATION FAILED. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS, DON'T YOU?
TOMORROW AT NOON ALL OF YOU WILL GO OVER THE TOP RETREAT IS NOT AN OPTION. UNDERSTOOD?
NOT JUST YOU THE ENTIRE REGIMENT.
... I KNOW .
'BUT WHY ALL OF US? WE DIDN'T DO ANYTHING EXCEPT FOLLOW HER ORDERS'
SHIT'
LAST NIGHT'S STORM WILL HAVE DISPERSED ANY REMAINING LEWISITE. THAT'S SOMETHING, ANYWAY.
IT'S RAINING.


... AND I KNOW WHAT THE TARGET FOR MY ONLY ARMOR PIERCING ROUND WILL BE.
LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE A FULL ATTACK ...
THE A.P.C.* OF THE ONE WHO ORDERED THAT GAS ATTACK. AT LEAST I'LL SEE YOU DIE.
WHOEVER YOU ARE IN THERE, THE ONE WHO ORDERED THAT GAS ATTACK AND WHO APPARENTLY DOESN'T VALUE THE LIVES OF YOUR OWN MEN ... YOU'RE MINE!
A MARK 896 COMMAND A.P.C. ... JUST THE TARGET FOR THIS SHELL.
I WANT THOSE COWARDS BACK THERE TO SEE THE RIGHT WAY TO DEAL WITH LICE!!!
FULL SPEED! RUN THE VERMIN OVER IF THAT SNIPER SHOWS HIS HEAD!!

THERE YOU ARE AT LA--

THE ENGINE! NO!!

YOU THREE! YOU'RE WITH ME! WE'RE GOING OVER THERE!
IT'S A WOMAN! SHE'S NOT MOVING. IS SHE FINALLY DEAD?
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! THAT SNIPER TOOK THE CAPTAIN OUT!!
... IT'S ... MY TIME ... AT LONG LAST ... BUT I DIE ... KNOWING ... THAT I STOPPED FOR GOOD ... PART ... OF YOU ... ... AAAAHH ...
... STARVED? THERE WAS ... NO FOOD LEFT ... YOU BASTARDS ... DESTROYED IT ALL ...
SIR! SHE'S ...
BUT NOT FOR MUCH LONGER, GIVEN THAT BLAST.
SHE'S STILL ALIVE!
LIEUTENANT FORMI? WHAT ABOUT THE CAPTAIN'S LAST ORDER?
COULD WE HAVE DONE AS SHE? I COULDN'T. COULD YOU?
LOOK AT HER. WHAT COURAGE. WHAT STRENGTH.
1895г
№
58142
AND TO THINK THAT WOMAN HELD US OFF WITH THIS MUSEUM PIECE: A SCOPE-FITTED MOISIN NAGANT RIFLE FROM THE CZARIST ERA!
FORGET IT. REPORT HER AS KILLED IN ACTION. THE NIGHTMARE IS OVER.


THEN WHAT'S SHE DOING WEARING IT? IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE, SIR.
THIS OLD WATCH OF HERS ALSO DATES FROM THAT TIME. IT'S A MAN'S WATCH.
THAT HELMET ... IT'S COLD WAR ERA JAPANESE ....
PERHAPS IT WAS ONCE THIS FELLOW'S. PERHAPS HE AND SHE ...
WE'LL NEVER KNOW, WILL WE? ONE THING'S FOR SURE. SHE'S AN ANGEL NOW. HER WAR IS OVER.
YOU'RE BEING SENTIMENTAL, SIR, BUT I GUESS IT'S THE ARTIST IN YOU.
BOTH HER AND HER FRIEND'S SKELTONS WILL MOULDER INTO DUST, BUT THEIR MEMORY AND LEGEND WILL LIVE ON.
IN A DIFFERENT TIME AND PLACE, IN A DIFFERENT REALITY IN ITS CALENDER YEAR OF 2020, THERE WAS ONCE A BATTLEFIELD THAT FINALLY FELL SILENT. ITS LAST WARRIOR HAD DIED. BOTH SIDES RESPECTED HER MEMORY. BOTH ALSO SAY THAT SHE FLIES WITH THE ANGELS NOW.
ENDE

"Angel's Armor-Piercing Bullet" published in Young Shoot, November 1989 issue